INFANTS AND TODDLERS
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Prevalence & Access To Early Learning in Twenty States

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a traumatic experience with long-term consequences, particularly for infants and toddlers in their most critical stages of development. Yet homelessness among young children is hidden. It includes a range of living situations: a six-month old living in a car with her family; a family of five squeezed into a motel room; a newborn in an emergency shelter; a two-year-old on a series of floors next to a series of couches, moving with his mother from place to place as she stays with anyone who will take them in. Lack of shelter, fear of having children removed from parental custody, and restrictive eligibility criteria for housing programs mean that most young children experiencing homelessness stay in places that are not easily identified.

To date, the only data on the number of young children experiencing homelessness is from the U.S. Department of Education, which estimates that approximately 1.3 million children under the age of six experienced homelessness in 2018-2019. However, these data are not disaggregated by age, and, therefore, the prevalence of homelessness among the very youngest — infants and toddlers — has thus far been unknown. Yet the years from prenatal to age three are a unique and critical period of child development — the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Moreover, research shows that homelessness is particularly injurious to young children, with lasting consequences. If we are to prevent longer term impacts, we must increase awareness and action to support expecting parents, as well as infants

and toddlers experiencing homelessness. A first step in doing so is understanding the prevalence of homelessness in this age range, and the gaps in their access to high-quality early learning programs.

To this end, SchoolHouse Connection and Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan analyzed data from twenty states that have formed broad-based coalitions to move prenatal-to-3 priorities forward.

This report describes the prevalence of homelessness among infants and toddlers in these twenty states; gaps in access to early learning programs; and recommendations for increasing enrollment and support.

This first-of-its-kind analysis finds that:

KEY FINDING 1

An estimated 311,961 infants and toddlers experienced homelessness across the twenty states included in this study in 2020-2021, representing approximately 3% of the 0-3 population.

KEY FINDING 2

Only 7% of these children are enrolled in an early childhood program (Early Head Start, Child Care, or Parents as Teachers Home Visiting). This means that at least 289,741 infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness were not identified by early learning programs in these states; many may not even be enrolled.

KEY FINDING 3

Of the three early childhood programs for which data was available, Early Head Start hasthe highest enrollment rate of children experiencing homelessness (3.4%), compared tochild care (2.5%) and Parents as Teachers Home Visiting (1%).

KEY FINDING 4

Across the twenty states, there is significant variation in the enrollment rates of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness. The next phase of our work will be to identify the policies and practices that have led to higher rates of enrollment in some states, in order to replicate them nationally.[1]

The low enrollment of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness in high quality early learning programs demands action at every level. Below we describe these findings in more detail, and outline action steps for early childhood programs and providers, federal agencies, state agencies, and the U.S. Congress. We hope the data in this report sparks conversations and informs specific steps to increase enrollment and support for these vulnerable children and their families.

Understanding Homelessness among Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Research shows that homelessness has a profound impact on child development. Homelessness during pregnancy is associated with low birthweight and preterm delivery. Homelessness in infancy has been found to be associated with delays in language, literacy, and social-emotional development, putting children at risk for later academic problems. The younger and longer a child experiences homelessness, the greater the cumulative toll on their health and well-being. In fact, the impacts of homelessness on young children, including on children's school readiness, are long-lasting, even after families are housed.[2]

Pregnancy and parenting are also risk factors for experiencing homelessness, especially

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1   For more information about the data sources and methodology, see Appendix A.

2   Young Children Experiencing Homelessness: An Overview (SchoolHouse Connection, 2022)

Among school-aged children, Black students are 2.5 times more likely to experience homelessness, Hispanic students are twice as likely, and American Indian/Alaska Native students are 1.7 times more likely.[5] These disparities hold for infants and toddlers as well, with Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native babies more likely to live in crowded settings and to move frequently.[6]

The Imperative of Access to High-Quality Early Learning Opportunities

For all young children experiencing homelessness, access to high-quality early learning programs is critical. Programs like Head Start, licensed child care, and home visiting offer developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that can mitigate the effects of homelessness. They also are equipped with staff who can identify and tend to broader family needs, including connections to available housing assistance and other services.

among youth and young adults. Youth who are parenting are three times more likely to experience homelessness than non-parenting youth, making parenting the second highest risk factor associated with homelessness as a young adult.[3] Forty-three percent of young women ages 18-25 experiencing homelessness are pregnant or parenting, with an estimated 1.1 million young children born to these young parents. High school students who have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant are ten times more likely to experience homelessness than students who had not been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant.[4]

Family homelessness does not occur in isolation from other inequities in our society. Racial and ethnic disparities among families experiencing homelessness are evident.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Along with all K12 school districts, early childhood programs including Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, and Early Intervention

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3   Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America. (Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2018).

4   Student Homelessness: Lessons from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (SchoolHouse Connection, 2021)

5   Student Homelessness: Lessons from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (SchoolHouse Connection, 2021)

6   State of Babies Yearbook 2022 (Zero to Three, 2022)

(IDEA Part C) are required to use the definition of homelessness in the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act. Some Home Visiting programs also voluntarily use this definition as well. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and specifically includes:

→ Shelters/transitional housing, including domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, youth shelters, and trailers provided by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

→ Staying in motels/hotels due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations, regardless of who pays for the motel/hotel room.

→ Staying with other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up," or "couch-surfing").

→ Staying in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

SchoolHouse Connection is working to help states and communities increase the enrollment of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness in high-quality early learning programs by:

→ Producing data dashboards for twenty states;
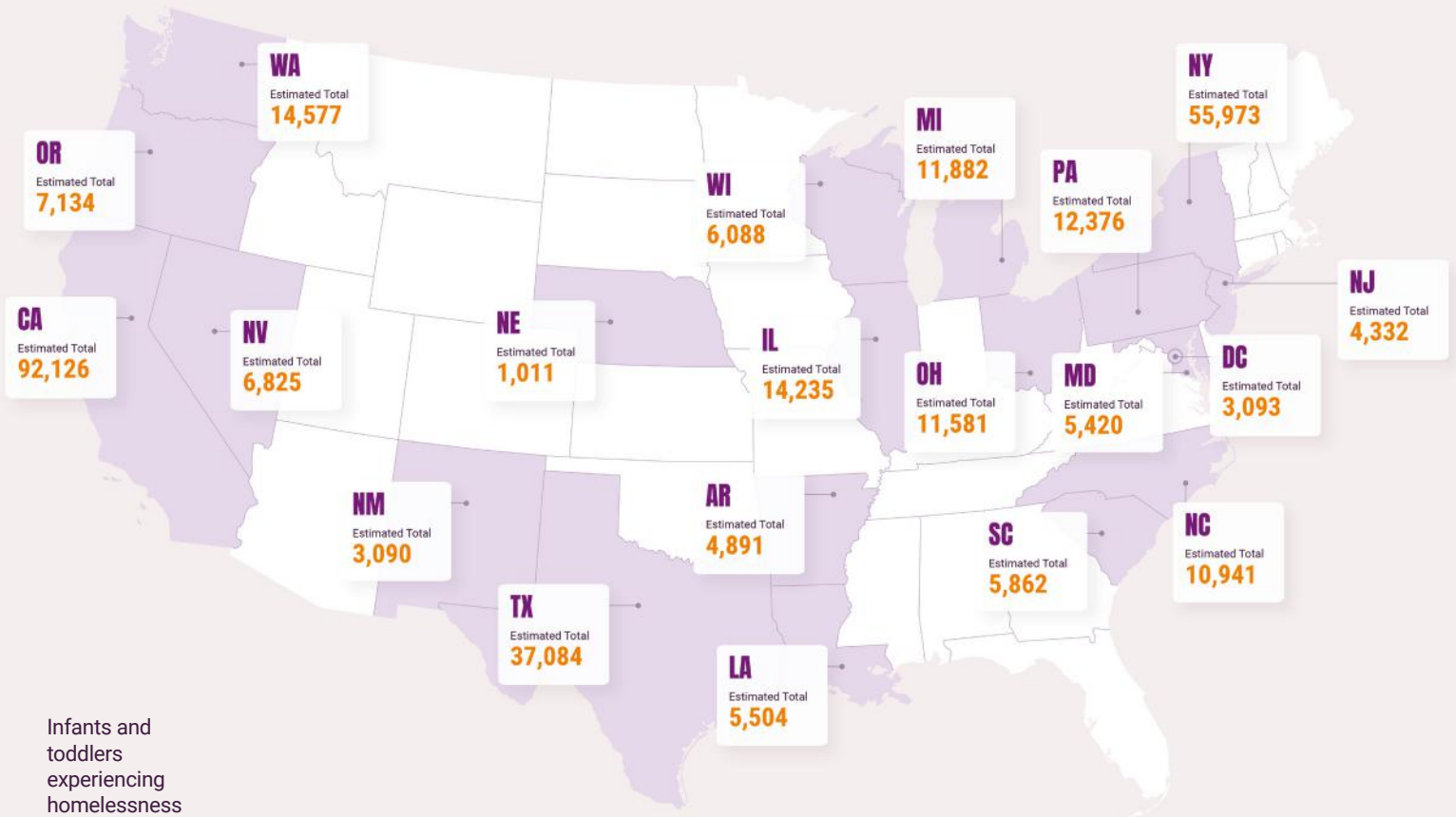
→ Working with a set of states to provide strategic assistance and establish actionable goals;

→ Providing practical assistance to several communities within those states to help increase outreach, identification, and enrollment of families, infants, and toddlers experiencing homelessness.

→ Advance the federal and state policy recommendations described in this report.

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDING 1

An estimated 311,961 infants and toddlers experienced homelessness across the twenty states included in this study in 2020-2021, representing approximately 3% of the 0-3 population.

WA Estimated Total **14,577**

NY Estimated Total **55,973**

MI Estimated Total **11,882**

PA Estimated Total **12,376**

OR Estimated Total **7,134**

WI Estimated Total **6,088**

NJ Estimated Total **4,332**

CA Estimated Total **92,126**

NV Estimated Total **6,825**

NE Estimated Total **1,011**

IL Estimated Total **14,235**

OH Estimated Total **11,581**

MD Estimated Total **5,420**

DC Estimated Total **3,093**

NM Estimated Total **3,090**

AR Estimated Total **4,891**

SC Estimated Total **5,862**

NC Estimated Total **10,941**

TX Estimated Total **37,084**

LA Estimated Total **5,504**

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness

Only 7% of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness were enrolled in an early childhood program (Early Head Start, Child Care, or Parents as Teachers Home Visiting) in 2020-2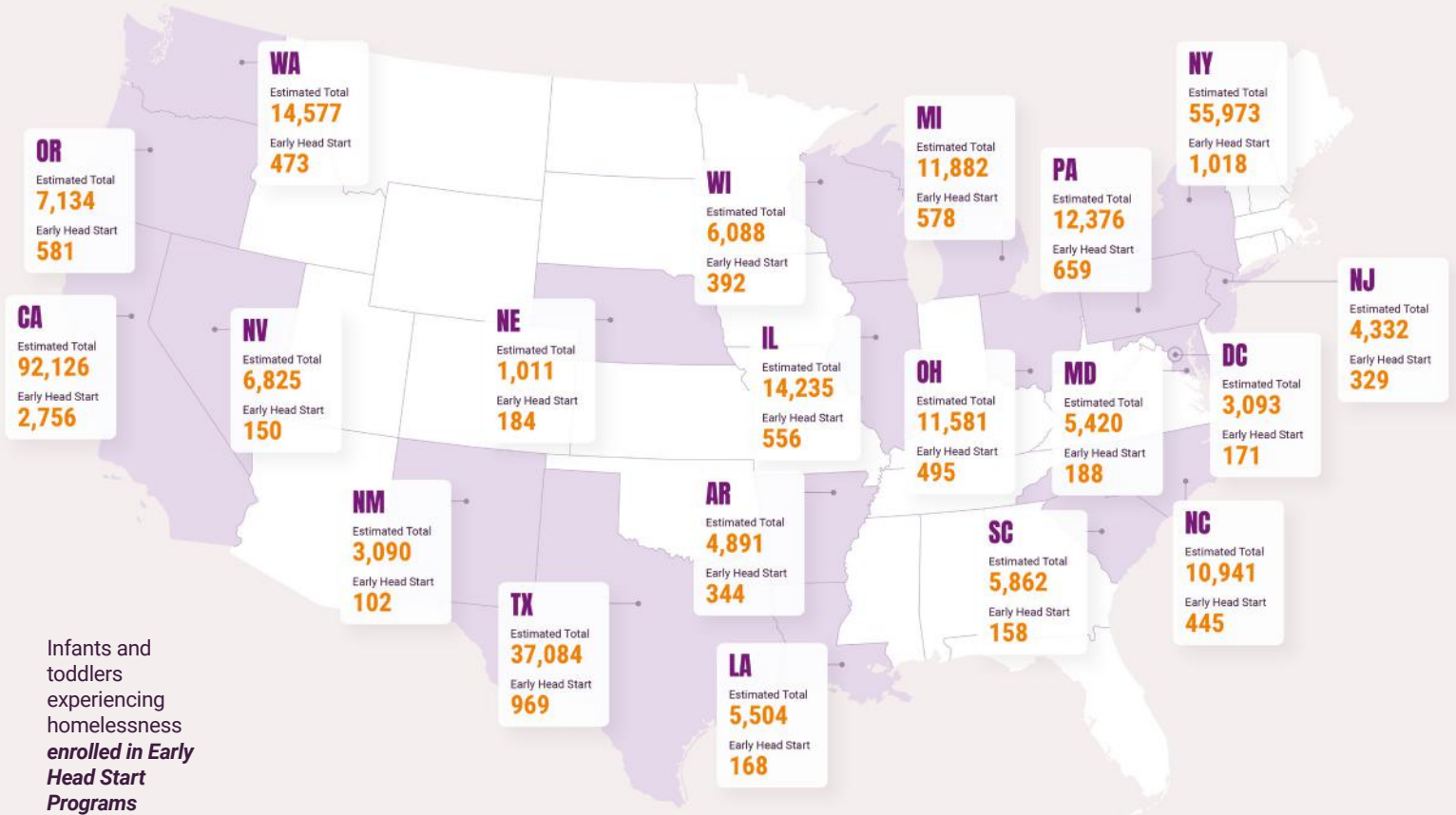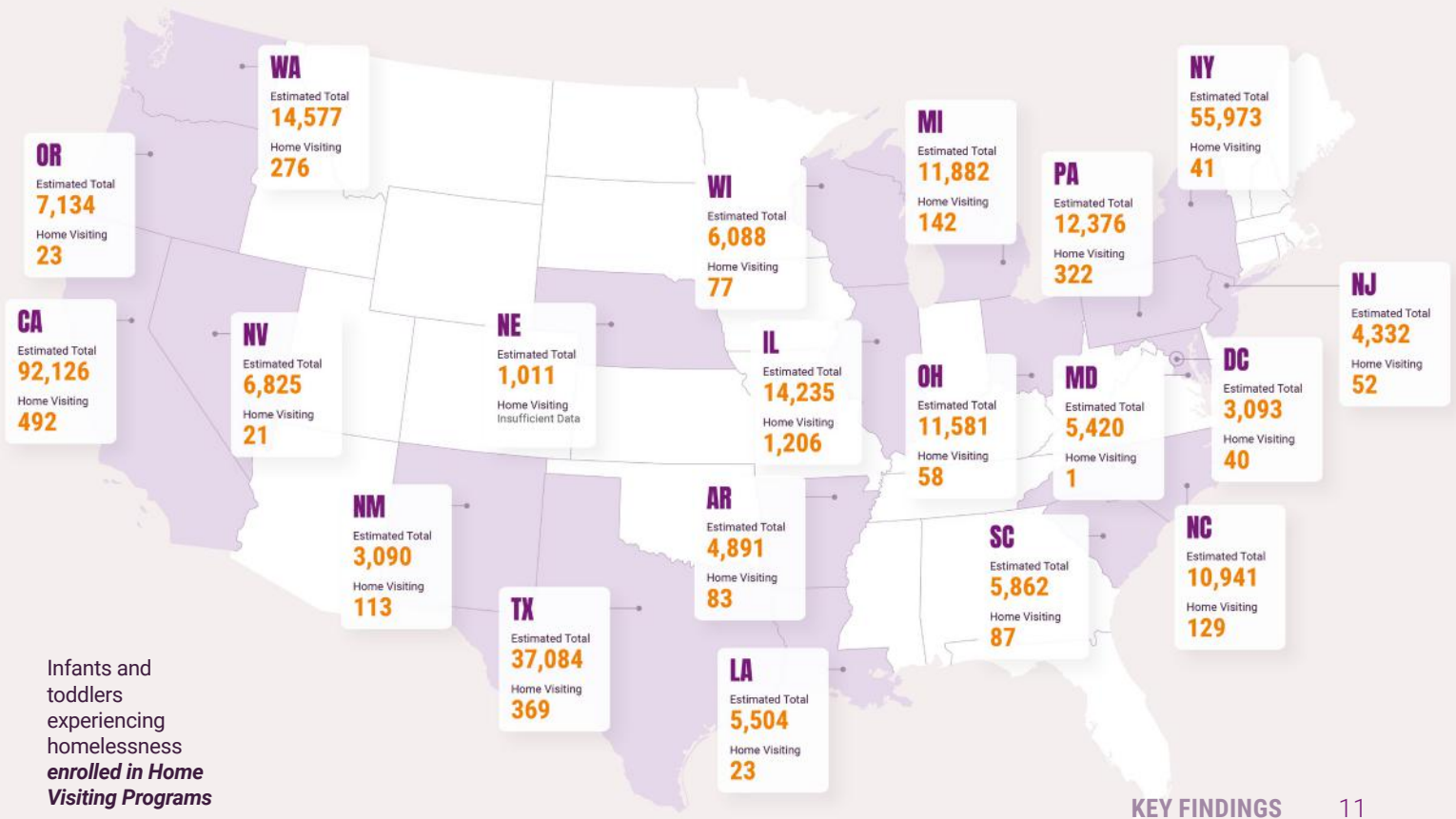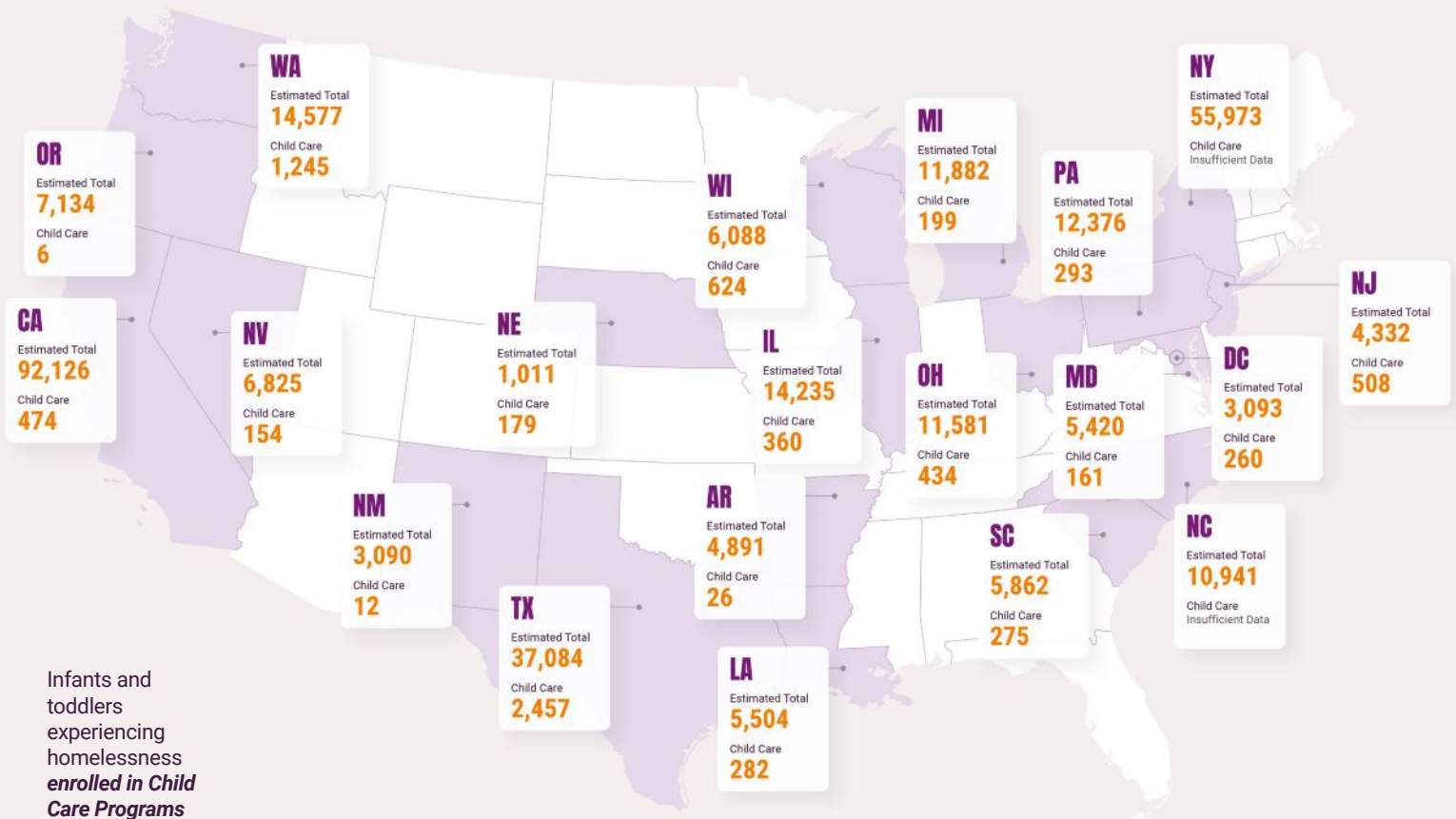021. This means that at least 289,741 infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness were not identified by early learning programs across the states included in this study; many may not even be enrolled.

WA
Estimated Total
14,577
% Served
13.68%

OR
Estimated Total
7,134
% Served
8.55%

CA
Estimated Total
92,126
% Served
4.04%

NV
Estimated Total
6,825
% Served
4.76%

NE
Estimated Total
1,011
% Served
35.89%

WI
Estimated Total
6,088
% Served
17.95%

IL
Estimated Total
14,235
% Served
14.91%

MI
Estimated Total
11,882
% Served
7.73%

PA
Estimated Total
12,376
% Served
10.29%

NY
Estimated Total
55,973
% Served
1.89%

NJ
Estimated Total
4,332
% Served
20.52%

OH
Estimated Total
11,581
% Served
8.52%

MD
Estimated Total
5,420
% Served
6.46%

DC
Estimated Total
3,093
% Served
15.23%

NM
Estimated Total
3,090
% Served
7.35%

AR
Estimated Total
4,891
% Served
9.27%

SC
Estimated Total
5,862
% Served
8.87%

NC
Estimated Total
10,941
% Served
5.25%

TX
Estimated Total
37,084
% Served
10.23%

LA
Estimated Total
5,504
% Served
8.59%

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

Of the three early childhood programs for which data was available, Early Head Start has the highest enrollment rate of children experiencing homelessness (3.4%), compared to child care (2.5%) and Parents as Teachers Home Visiting (1%).

WA
Estimated Total
14,577
Early Head Start
473

OR
Estimated Total
7,134
Early Head Start
581

CA
Estimated Total
92,126
Early Head Start
2,756

NV
Estimated Total
6,825
Early Head Start
150

NE
Estimated Total
1,011
Early Head Start
184

WI
Estimated Total
6,088
Early Head Start
392

IL
Estimated Total
14,235
Early Head Start
556

MI
Estimated Total
11,882
Early Head Start
578

PA
Estimated Total
12,376
Early Head Start
659

NY
Estimated Total
55,973
Early Head Start
1,018

OH
Estimated Total
11,581
Early Head Start
495

MD
Estimated Total
5,420
Early Head Start
188

DC
Estimated Total
3,093
Early Head Start
171

NJ
Estimated Total
4,332
Early Head Start
329

NM
Estimated Total
3,090
Early Head Start
102

TX
Estimated Total
37,084
Early Head Start
969

AR
Estimated Total
4,891
Early Head Start
344

LA
Estimated Total
5,504
Early Head Start
168

SC
Estimated Total
5,862
Early Head Start
158

NC
Estimated Total
10,941
Early Head Start
445

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness *enrolled in Early Head Start Programs*

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness *enrolled in Child Care Programs*

State	Estimated Total	Child Care
WA	14,577	1,245
OR	7,134	6
CA	92,126	474
NV	6,825	154
NM	3,090	12
TX	37,084	2,457
NE	1,011	179
WI	6,088	624
IL	14,235	360
AR	4,891	26
LA	5,504	282
MI	11,882	199
OH	11,581	434
MD	5,420	161
SC	5,862	275
PA	12,376	293
NY	55,973	Insufficient Data
DC	3,093	260
NJ	4,332	508
NC	10,941	Insufficient Data

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness *enrolled in Home Visiting Programs*

State	Estimated Total	Home Visiting
WA	14,577	276
OR	7,134	23
CA	92,126	492
NV	6,825	21
NM	3,090	113
TX	37,084	369
NE	1,011	Insufficient Data
WI	6,088	77
IL	14,235	1,206
AR	4,891	83
LA	5,504	23
MI	11,882	142
OH	11,581	58
MD	5,420	1
SC	5,862	87
PA	12,376	322
NY	55,973	41
DC	3,093	40
NJ	4,332	52
NC	10,941	129

Across the twenty states, there is significant variation in the enrollment rates of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness. Nebraska has a higher-than-average enrollment rate across all programs, at 36%. Other states with above average enrollment rates include New Jersey (20.5%), Wisconsin (18%), and DC and Illinois (15% each). Other states stand out in specific program enrollment rates. For example, Illinois has a 16% enrollment rate of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness in Parents as Teachers home visiting programs, compared to an average of 9% across all states included in the study. And while the average enrollment rate in Early Head Start across these states is 3.4% (ranging from .75% to 4.5%, DC and Nebraska enroll at the highest rates, 3.4% and 4.5% respectively).

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON IDENTIFICATION AND DATA COLLECTION

It is important to note that one data source used to calculate the estimated population of children ages 0-3 is the percentage of first graders in each state who are identified by school districts each year as experiencing homelessness. "While the most recent data available is from the 2020-2021 school year, virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges both in identifying children experiencing homelessness and in staying in touch with families. For example, during the 2019-2020 school year, 65,931 first graders were identified as experiencing homelessness across the states in the study, compared to 56,664 during the 2020-2021 school year, representing a 14% decrease in identification. The number of 3-5 year olds experiencing homelessness enrolled in public school decreased even more substantially, from 51,170 in 2019-2020, to 31,241 in 2020-2021 — a decrease of 40%. A survey of school district liaisons in fall 2020 attributed declines in the number of enrolled students experiencing homelessness to the inability to identify and communicate with families during virtual learning, not to reduced rates of homelessness. Therefore, the population estimates in this report should be considered very conservative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

for Supporting Infants, Toddlers, and Families Experiencing Homelessness

Early Childhood Programs and Providers:
Improve Outreach, Identification, and Support

There are many reasons why families experiencing homelessness may have difficulty accessing high-quality early learning programs. For some, the documentation required for enrollment is too burdensome, as they may have lost access to birth certificates, immunization records, and employment verification documents. Other families may be discouraged by being placed on a long waiting list, or may have trouble understanding how to begin the process of enrollment. Lack of transportation to enroll and to participate may stand in the way.

Early Head Start and federally funded child care programs have specific legal requirements to identify children experiencing homelessness, and to remove barriers to their enrollment. There are many ways that these requirements can be implemented, and that all early childhood programs can remove barriers and increase support.

→ **Conduct outreach activities within the community to reach families experiencing homelessness.** This could include sharing public service announcements, and posting flyers in areas frequented by families experiencing homelessness, like motel lobbies, libraries, laundromats, homeless shelters, public bathrooms, and medical offices.

→ **Ensure that all program staff are trained on the definition and signs of homelessness, and know what to do if they believe a family is experiencing homelessness.** Head Start's Decision-Making Tool to Determine a Family's Homelessness Situation can be used as a blueprint for enrollment form questionnaires.

→ **Add questions about housing situations to enrollment/intake forms and interview questionnaires, but avoid using the word "homeless."** Many families do not see themselves as experiencing homelessness, might feel embarrassed about it, and/or fear punitive action will be taken against them. It's also important to help families

understand that the purpose of questions related to housing status is to offer support and services.

→ **Develop multiple opportunities throughout the year to discreetly ask families about their living situation,** rather than just once during intake or enrollment. This increases the chances of identifying families experiencing homelessness.

→ **Strengthen partnerships with programs and organizations that may be able to refer families already identified as experiencing homelessness.** This could include homeless shelters and other community-based organizations, and should also include reaching out to local K12 school district homeless education liaisons, who are required to make referrals of young children who are not yet school age to appropriate early learning programs.

The Referral App for Children Experiencing Homelessness is a tool to help K12 homeless education liaisons refer younger children to high-quality early learning programs. The app works by helping liaisons identify the best local early learning program that a child might be eligible for, and sharing information with the program so they can reach out to the family for enrollment. SchoolHouse Connection is currently piloting the app across eight states during the 2022-2023 school year.

→ **Help families receive services through outside agencies by streamlining referral processes, and helping them complete applications for assistance.** Because housing is a critical need, some programs offer to help families fill out applications for housing assistance or provide transportation to and from housing appointments. In Connecticut, the Head Start on Housing program provides housing vouchers to families enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Federal Agencies:
Provide Stronger Oversight of Existing Policies to Remove Barriers for Families Experiencing Homelessness

In the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, Congress recognized the unique obstacles created by homelessness and included specific requirements to identify and remove barriers to enrollment. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services strengthened these policies in regulations for both federal programs in 2016. However, many years later, core protections are not being implemented widely, or with fidelity. Federal agencies can provide leadership to help states and programs actualize these existing requirements.

OFFICE OF CHILD CARE (OCC)

→ **Improve homelessness data quality and transparency by publishing annually the number of children experiencing homelessness who are receiving child care subsidies, disaggregated by**

state, age, race, ethnicity, and funding source.[7] Currently, the Office of Child Care (OCC) publishes monthly averages of the numbers of families experiencing homelessness disaggregated by state. However, having information reported on the status of children experiencing homelessness (in addition to families) allows for comparison across federally-funded programs (including public schools) to better assess gaps and improve coordination. SchoolHouse Connection is very grateful to OCC for providing the data used for this report; having these data available for all 50 states, annually, and made available to the public, would create important baseline information against which to measure progress in increasing access to child care. We further recommend that OCC provide technical assistance to, and conduct monitoring of, states to improve the quality and completeness of the data that states are required to collect on the homelessness status of children receiving child care subsidies.

→ **Provide more oversight to ensure that states are complying with existing Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) regulations on homelessness,** including consistent use of the definition of homelessness aligned with the McKinney-Vento Act. While CCDF is a block grant and states have significant flexibility in how they implement its provisions, there are nonetheless clear requirements concerning identification, enrollment, and prioritization.

A review of homelessness policies in FY2022-2024 CCDF State Plans shows a wide range of stated policies, but there is no information on the extent to which these policies are actually implemented. OCC should add CCDF homelessness provisions to its CCDF monitoring protocols to ensure compliance and robust implementation.

→ **Encourage states to utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to remove barriers to access for families experiencing homelessness.** ARPA included a $15 billion investment in the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which is flexible and may be used for anything allowable in CCDF. OCC should encourage state agencies to use these funds in ways that will help families experiencing homelessness access child care, such as by providing transportation, waiving copayments, and using grants or contracts to reserve dedicated child care slots for children experiencing homelessness.

OFFICE OF HEAD START (OHS)

→ **Provide more oversight of and targeted support to Early Head Start programs to help them comply with performance standards on homelessness, remove barriers to enrollment, and increase local partnerships.** OHS could work across agencies to foster relationships and facilitate enrollment. For example, in 2020, the Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families Acting

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7   States report the number of children enrolled in child care who receive subsidy assistance. Some states report the number of enrolled children who receive subsidies only through Child Care Development Funds, while other states report children who receive CCDF funds as well as additional sources of subsidy funding, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Social Services Block Grant.

Commissioner, Family and Youth Services Bureau, sent individualized letters to Maternity Group Home grantees to help connect them with their local Early Head Start grantee.

→ **Increase collaboration and coordination with the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program.** Every local educational agency is required to designate a liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness, and liaisons are required to proactively identify young children experiencing homelessness, and ensure that they have access to Early Head Start and other early childhood programs, including Early Intervention services. OHS and ED could bring grantees and local liaisons together virtually and in regional cross-trainings to increase awareness and build relationships. For example, Head Start Region VI provided virtual opportunities for Head Start and Early Head Start grantees to meet and collaborate with McKinney-Vento liaisons within each of the five states across the region (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). These joint convenings help liaisons understand the early childhood programs that are offered in their state and community, and when and how to refer young children experiencing homelessness.

HUMAN RESOURCES & SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA)

→ **Improve data collection on the housing status of all participants in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, and publish this data annually, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.** HRSA requires MIECHV Program grantees to collect and report demographic data, including on the housing status of adult participants. However, the categories of homelessness used on the data collection form do not align with the definition of homelessness used by other federal early childhood programs, nor is information on housing status collected for child participants. Publishing information annually on the number of children and adults experiencing homelessness who participate in MIECHV, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, would allow programs and policymakers to monitor trends, and would provide a baseline from which to assess progress in increasing access and eliminating racial disparities.

→ **Provide oversight of and increase compliance with the 2009 requirement that HUD homeless assistance programs serving families designate a staff person to ensure that children are connected to early childhood programs,** such as Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, child care, and McKinney-Vento education services. Specifically, HUD should require that the name and contact information of homeless service provider points-of-contact are made public and posted on the website of the lead agency for the Continuum of Care. HUD also should collaborate with HHS and ED to provide training for these individuals to ensure they are knowledgeable about early childhood programs, and how to make referrals.

→ **Incentivize the enrollment of infants and toddlers in high quality early learning programs** by increasing points for collaborative applicants for HUD homeless assistance who demonstrate increased enrollment of young children in high quality early learning programs and who describe specific, robust collaborations in their applications.

→ **Disaggregate data by age, race, and ethnicity for children served in HUD homeless assistance programs.** The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR): Part 2 provides a national estimate of people who utilized shelter programs at some point during the year. The report includes the percentage of children in shelter under age five, and also between the ages of six and seventeen, but it does not further disaggregate by age. For example, the 2020 report indicates that 29% of people in families in HUD-funded shelters were five years of age or younger, which was much higher than among all families in the U.S. (15%) or families living in poverty (18%). In earlier reports, HUD also included the number of infants under twelve months of age (10.3% of all children in the 2012 AHAR), but stopped including this data point in the AHAR after 2013. Having more specific information for the zero-to-three age range would inform and facilitate cross-agency collaboration with early learning programs, and help programs and policymakers assess trends. HUD should collect and publish these data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to inform progress in eliminating racial disparities.

State Agencies:
Strengthen Policies and Practices to Connect Families with Young Children Experiencing Homelessness to High-Quality Early Childhood Programs

State agencies have both specific requirements and an essential role to play in increasing access to high-quality early childhood programs for infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness. For example:

CCDF includes specific requirements for state lead agencies to identify, prioritize, and expedite enrollment of children experiencing homelessness.

The education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act requires state homeless education coordinators to coordinate and collaborate with child care providers.

State Directors of Head Start Collaboration are required to develop strategic plans that enhance collaboration and coordination of Head Start services with early childhood education for children experiencing homelessness.

These federal protections and funding streams are important and powerful. However, as early childhood education is implemented differently from state to state, state laws are equally important. Below are recommendations for how state agencies can implement existing provisions, and take additional steps to increase statewide access and support.

→ **Prioritize families experiencing homelessness in program enrollment and subsidy applications.**

According to CCDF regulations, child care agencies must prioritize children experiencing homelessness. However, according to a review of homelessness policies in FY2022-2024 CCDF State Plans, not all states have indicated that they are doing so, and there is little information available about the implementation efforts or impact of prioritization in those states that do indicate a homelessness priority. Families are often unaware of, or have difficulty navigating, subsidy application processes in particular. Georgia has addressed this by creating a workaround in its consolidated assistance application, so that when a family experiencing homelessness applies for SNAP and child care subsidy, they are not stuck on a lengthy waiting list and unable to access child care. This has decreased the wait

time from several months, to 7-10 days. South Carolina's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agency hired a full-time Homeless Support Specialist and provides dedicated child care slots for families experiencing homelessness with no co-pay. Families may also apply for child care subsidies through shelters, school district liaisons, and local homeless coalitions

In Illinois, families experiencing homelessness are considered a priority population, per the state's Early Learning Council. State agencies that operate early care and learning programs and services are strongly encouraged to operationalize prioritization of this set of populations into program policies and funding decisions. Indeed, in the years since the priority population list was established, changes have been made to support increased enrollment in Illinois's early care and learning programs and services, which include Early Intervention/IDEA Part C, Home Visiting, Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG, the state funding stream for school and community-based pre-K and home and center-based birth to three programs), and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). ECBG programs, for example, are required to weight children experiencing homelessness more heavily than others when determining enrollment. Additionally, Illinois' home visiting agency has directed funds to a project specifically serving families experiencing homelessness.

→ **Extend deadlines for submitting any eligibility or documentation requirements, such as immunization and/or family income or work requirements.**

Some states have codified extensions and waivers so that families experiencing

homelessness can access child care more easily. For example:

→ In Arkansas, child care eligibility requirements are waived for children experiencing homelessness

→ The District of Columbia provides automatic eligibility without consideration of income

→ Michigan waives the co-payment for families experiencing homelessness

→ Pennsylvania provides a 183-day grace period for families to submit eligibility/enrollment documentation, during which time the child may still attend the child care program.

→ Other states provide an extension for children to meet immunization requirements, with some states like Illinois, Nevada, and Pennsylvania allowing up to 90 days.

→ To learn more about your state's requirements, see SchoolHouse Connection's State Provisions to Help Children Experiencing Homelessness Access Child Care and Preschool

→ **Ensure that staff who enroll families in child care receive training on the definition of homelessness and how to expedite enrollment of families experiencing homelessness.** States should ensure that staff understand the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness which is also included in Federal Child Care regulations. Additionally, all child care staff should know their particular state's policies about waiving copay, immunization and work requirements where applicable. Agencies

should also help staff understand how to implement these regulations and policies through best practices, tools, and sample documents such as enrollment forms and questionnaires.

→ **Collaborate across systems to ensure better access to early childhood programs for families experiencing homelessness.** This collaboration includes state departments of early learning, education, health and human services, housing, and others that serve families and children. Communicating across agencies about challenges, supports, and resources available can lead to improved and streamlined services. This could include regular meetings to provide updates on relevant policies, funding, and opportunities for partnership.

In North Carolina, the Yay Babies coalition brings together leaders in the early childhood, K12, and homeless service sectors to increase services and outcomes for children and families experiencing

homelessness. They use data to develop policy, practice and research agendas and ensure that children and families experiencing homelessness are prioritized across state agencies.

→ **Work with housing agencies to create streamlined systems for accessing housing assistance, and to create dedicated housing resources that can be accessed by early learning programs.** For example, the [Connecticut Head Start on Housing](#) Voucher pilot program has shown tremendous results after the first year, including successfully housing families by putting housing vouchers directly into the hands of Head Start.

→ **Collect and disaggregate existing data, and identify existing data that might be needed.** State agencies, legislators, and advocates can start by conducting a needs assessment using existing data, including the data points in this brief: home visiting, child care, and Early Head Start enrollment. States might have additional data that can be added, such as identification of children identified by K12 school district homeless education liaisons. Other sources of data might include Early Intervention and additional state-specific educational programs and services that are reaching families experiencing homelessness, as well as young children served by local housing and shelter agencies.

→ **Conduct an audit of state policies across agencies that may pose barriers to services, or that provide opportunities for increasing access and support.** For example, all states have the option to use a standard housing deduction for people experiencing homelessness. This policy prevents food assistance from being

reduced when recipients no longer have housing costs to report on their SNAP application. This simple step can improve nutrition and reduce hunger among young children experiencing homelessness.

→ **Invest state funding across early learning systems.** States should provide flexible funding to communities and providers to expand the availability of care, and allow families experiencing homelessness to have access to high-quality early learning options that are best-suited to their needs. This is particularly important for families in different geographic areas, such as rural communities and child care deserts, where options may already be limited or unavailable. Limiting funding for infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness to just one type of program will exacerbate barriers for those who cannot already access it.

→ **Use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to remove barriers to access for families experiencing homelessness.** As mentioned above, ARPA included a $15 billion investment in the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which may be used for anything allowable in CCDF. State agencies should use these funds to help families experiencing homelessness access child care, such as by providing transportation, waiving copayments, and using grants or contracts to reserve dedicated child care slots for children experiencing homelessness. State agencies can facilitate this use of funds by issuing guidance and convening licensed child care providers to ensure they are aware of these allowable uses, and share ideas and strategies for using funds for these purposes.

Congress:
Increase Investment Across All Prenatal-3 Programs, with Specific Policies to Remove Barriers and Increase and Incentivize Support for Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness

Federally-funded programs for infants and toddlers are under-resourced and serve a fraction of all children who are eligible for them. Congress should increase support for these programs to reach all children who can benefit from them, including Early Head Start, CCDF, Early Intervention (IDEA Part C), and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. Congress also must invest in other early education, housing, health, nutrition, and anti-poverty programs that can prevent homelessness from occurring and help resolve it quickly when it does occur.

Specific new federal policies that would remove barriers and incentivize and increase support for infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness in high-quality early childhood programs include:

→ **Require early learning programs to designate a point of contact for families experiencing homelessness and for other highly mobile and vulnerable children (such as children in foster care).** While much work remains to be done to ensure the full implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act's requirement for local education agencies to designate a liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness,

nonetheless the designation of the liaison has transformed the fabric of the K12 system for families experiencing homelessness – liaisons serve as essential navigators within the school system and for the larger community. The McKinney-Vento Act also requires an office of state coordinator for homeless education within state education agencies. Requiring analogous positions in key early childhood programs, at both the state and local level, would create the same mechanism for identifying families and ensuring cross-agency collaboration. For example, Hawaii

and North Carolina have established state-level early childhood homelessness positions with [American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth](#) funds to work across early childhood systems.

→ **Make children experiencing homelessness categorically eligible and prioritized for child care services.** Democrats and Republicans have introduced legislation to reform federally-funded child care. The Republican proposal (the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 2022) includes categorical eligibility for children experiencing homelessness, which would remove income and documentation barriers, and allow for greater access. The Democratic proposal (the Build Back Better Act) also includes categorical eligibility for children experiencing homelessness, as well as several other provisions to increase support for children and families experiencing homelessness. The Build Back Better Act also significantly increases the overall investment in child care by establishing a new "Birth Through Five Child Care and Early Learning Entitlement" to provide direct child care services for eligible children who are under age six and not yet enrolled in kindergarten. Without greater access to child care, families experiencing homelessness will struggle to permanently exit homelessness.

→ **Reauthorize the Maternal Child Home Visiting Reauthorization Act, and align its implementation with the homelessness provisions in other federal early childhood programs.** Home visiting is uniquely poised to address the two-generational impacts of homelessness: By meeting families where they are, despite their mobility, home visiting enables parents and children to continually benefit from the program's services and supports. A recent evaluation of home visiting services for families experiencing homelessness found significant potential to mitigate adverse impacts of homelessness, although the delivery of these services to families in homeless situations required extra time and additional effort.[8] Reauthorization of MIECHV is an opportunity to ensure that more vulnerable families, including children and families experiencing homelessness, have access to services that can disrupt the generational cycle of homelessness, yielding lifelong benefits. Reauthorization and implementation should ensure outreach to and prioritization of families who meet the McKinney-Vento Act's education subtitle definition of homelessness, and thus be aligned with Head Start and CCDF provisions.

→ **Increase support for age-appropriate transportation services for highly mobile populations, including children experiencing homelessness and those in foster care.** Lack of transportation is consistently cited by parents and programs as a top barrier to enrolling and participating in high-quality early learning programs. Congress should fund and incentivize the provision of age-appropriate transportation services for children experiencing homelessness and other highly mobile populations, including children in foster care.

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8   [Home visiting with families experiencing homelessness.](#) (Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2022)

→ **Increase safe, affordable housing options and remove barriers to homeless and housing assistance.** The lack of safe, affordable housing is a key driver of homelessness; at the same time, lack of appropriate shelter options endangers infants, toddlers, and their families. Early learning programs consistently report that families with young children face numerous barriers in accessing both housing and homeless services, which in turn creates obstacles to participation in early learning programs. Congress should address these barriers by:

> → *Aligning HUD's definition of homelessness with the definition used by federal early childhood programs.* Legislation such as the bipartisan Homeless Children and Youth Act would make children who are identified as homeless by certain federal programs, including Head Start and child care programs, eligible for HUD homeless assistance. Currently, families who stay temporarily with others, or in motels not paid for by government or charity, are not considered homeless by HUD; they are therefore ineligible for HUD homeless assistance. Yet infants and toddlers in these hidden homeless situations, and their parents, are as vulnerable as those who do meet HUD's definition, and should be eligible for services.

> → *Targeting housing vouchers and mobility services to families with young children.* The Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act is bipartisan legislation that would create an additional 500,000 housing vouchers over five years for low-income, high-need families with young children. Pregnant women and families with a child under age 6 would qualify for these new vouchers if they have a history of homelessness or housing instability, live in an area of concentrated poverty, or are at risk of being pushed out of an opportunity area. The legislation also would provide families receiving the new vouchers with access to counseling and case management services that have a proven track record of helping families move out of poverty.
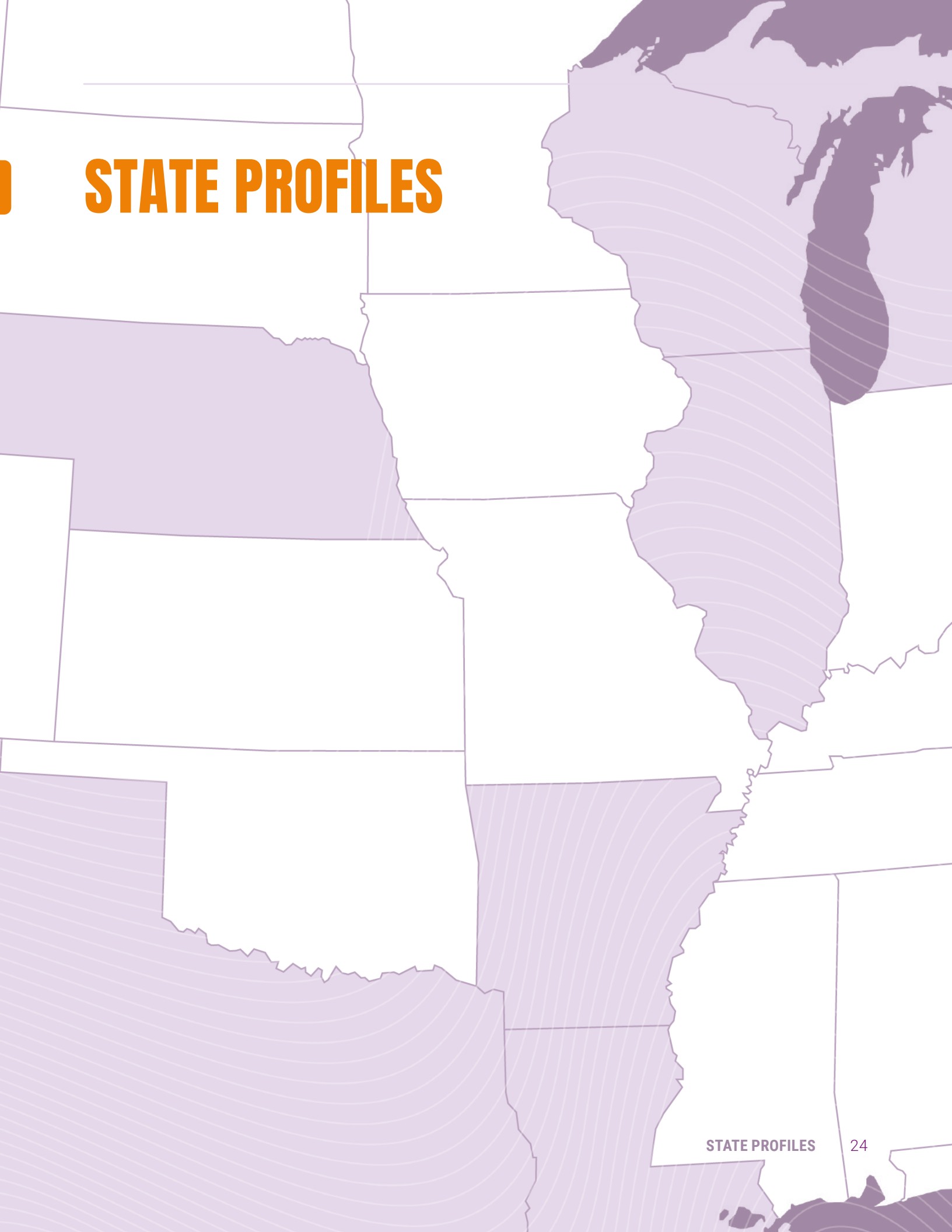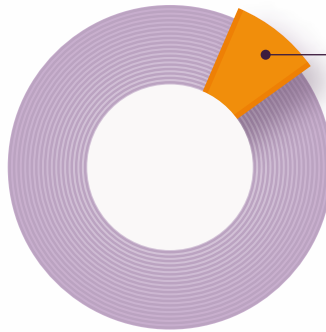
23

STATE PROFILES

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

ARKANSAS

453 (9.26%)

Total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

4,891

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 11

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

26

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

344

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Home Visiting Programs

83

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

CALIFORNIA

92,126

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness
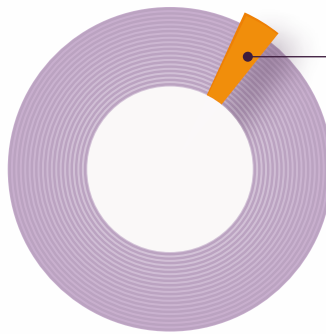
3,722 (4.04%)

Total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 25

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness

Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

474

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

2,756

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Home Visiting Programs

492

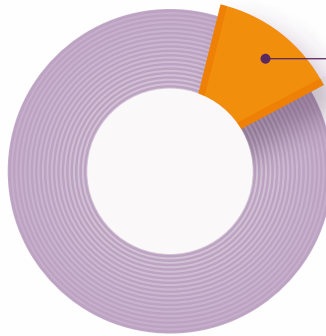Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

DC

3,093

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

471 (15.23%)

Total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 7

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

260

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

171

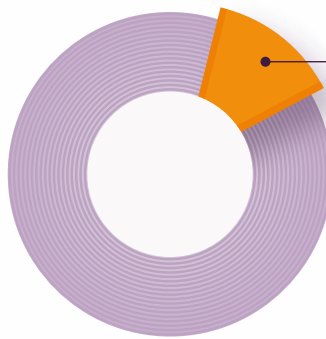Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
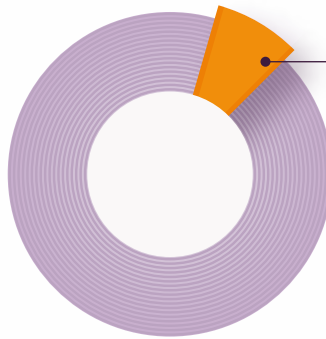
Home Visiting Programs

40

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

ILLINOIS

14,235

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

2,122 (14.91%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 7

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
360	**556**	**1,206**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

LOUISIANA

5,504

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

473 (8.59%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 12

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	Early Head Start Programs	Home Visiting Programs
282	**168**	**23**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

STATE PROFILES   29

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

MARYLAND

350 (6.46%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

5,420

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 15

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

161

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

188

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
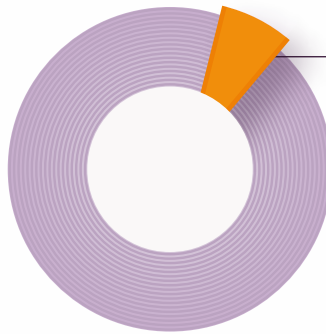
Home Visiting Programs

1

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

MICHIGAN

919 (7.73%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

11,882

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 13

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

199

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

578

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
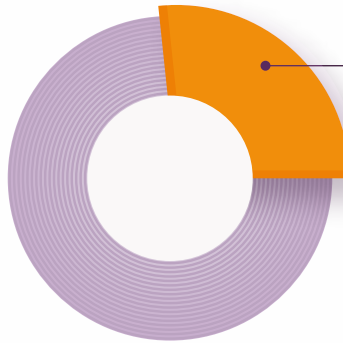
Home Visiting Programs

142

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

NEBRASKA

363 (35.91%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

1,011

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 3

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

179

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

184

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Home Visiting Programs

Insufficient Data

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

STATE PROFILES   32

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

NEVADA

325 (4.76%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

6,825
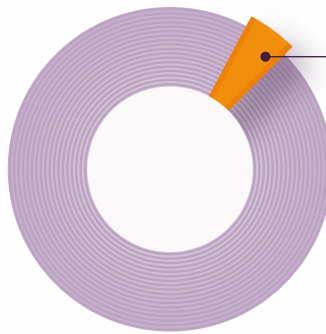
Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 21

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness

Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

154

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

150

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
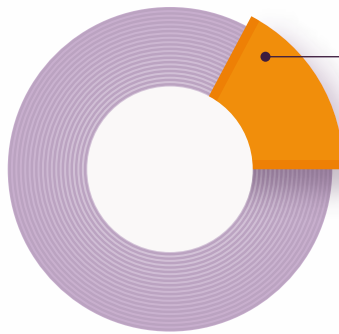
Home Visiting Programs

21

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

NEW JERSEY

4,332

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

889 (20.52%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 5

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness

Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

508

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

329

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
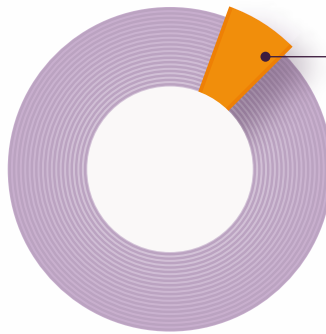
Home Visiting Programs

52

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

NEW MEXICO

3,090

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

227 (7.35%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 14

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
12	**102**	**113**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

STATE PROFILES   35

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

NEW YORK

55,973

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness
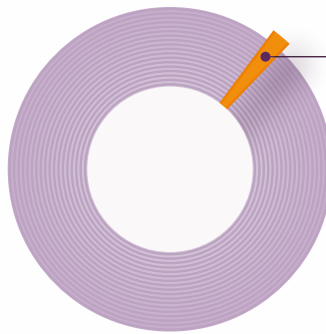
1,059 (1.89%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 53

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	Early Head Start Programs	Home Visiting Programs
Insufficient Data	**1,018**	**41**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

NORTH CAROLINA

10,941

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness
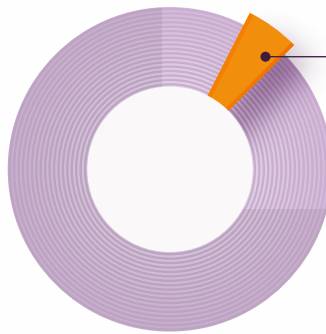
574 (5.25%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 19

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
Insufficient Data	**445**	**129**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.
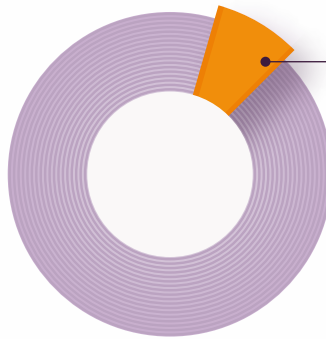
STATE PROFILES   37

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

OHIO

11,581

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

987 (8.52%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 12

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
434	**495**	**58**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

STATE PROFILES   38

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

OREGON

7,134

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness
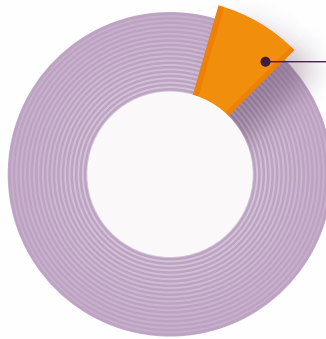
610 (8.55%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 12

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

6

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

581

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
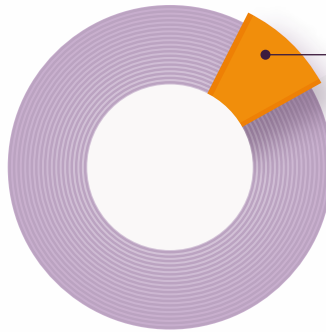
Home Visiting Programs

23

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

PENNSYLVANIA

12,376

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

1,274 (10.29%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 10

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

293

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

659

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
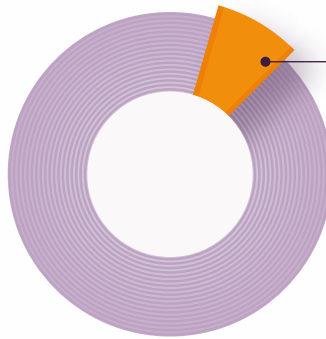
Home Visiting Programs

322

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

SOUTH CAROLINA

5,862

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

520 (8.87%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 11

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs

275

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Early Head Start Programs

158

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled
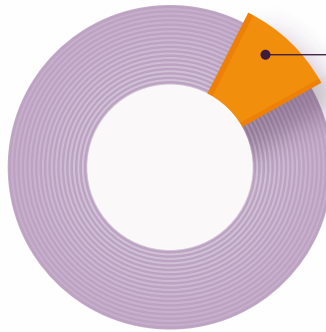
Home Visiting Programs

87

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

TEXAS

3,795 (10.23%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

37,084

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 10

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
2,457	**969**	**369**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Programs:

WASHINGTON

14,577

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness
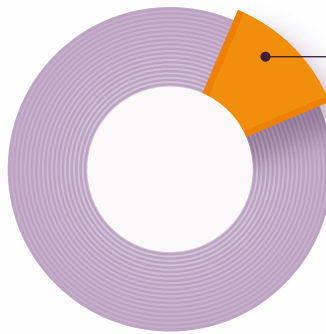
1,994 (13.68%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

OR 1 IN 7

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
1,245	**473**	**276**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

WISCONSIN
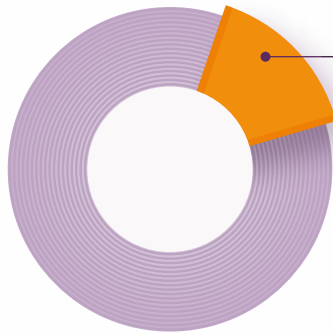
1,093 (17.95%)

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness *enrolled in a program*

6,088

Estimated total population aged 0-3 experiencing homelessness

OR 1 IN 6

Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

Estimated Total Population of Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness
Enrolled in an Early Childhood Program

Child Care Programs	**Early Head Start Programs**	**Home Visiting Programs**
624	**392**	**77**
Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled	Infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled

For more information about these data sources, please see Appendix A.

APPENDIX A: DATA NOTES

The total number of children ages 0-3 experiencing homelessness in each state was estimated by multiplying the total population of children ages 0-3 reported by Kid's Count for the year 2020 by the percent of first graders experiencing homelessness in school year 2020-21 reported by the U.S. Department of Education.[9] First grade was chosen because it is the first year that children are required to attend school across all the states included in the study. While using the U.S. Department of Education data on homelessness provides a close to population level count (only children attending public and charter schools are included), this approach still yields a conservative estimate of the experience of homelessness among very young children. This is because the risk of experiencing homelessness is known to be greater for very young children compared to children in elementary school, and the COVID pandemic resulted in fewer children being identified as homeless in school year 2020-21.

For enrollment data, SchoolHouse Connection collected information from the following sources:

→ Early Head Start Program Information Report

→ Data from the Office of Child Care, showing the enrollment of children ages 0-3 experiencing homelessness and enrolled in licensed child care programs, as reported by states

→ Parents as Teachers affiliate data, reported to the national office, showing the number of families identified as experiencing housing instability

Children enrolled in any of these programs who were under the age of four and identified in the program data as experiencing homelessness were added together to create the estimate of the total number of very young children experiencing homelessness who are not identified by or enrolled in an early childhood programs. It is important to note that it is possible some homeless children may be served by more than one of these programs and therefore double counted. If this is the case, however, that would mean that our estimate overstates the number of very young homeless children who are identified and supported by an early childhood program.

The final estimate of the total number and percent of children ages 0-3 who are either not identified as homeless or are homeless and not enrolled in one of the above early

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9 Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2020-21; and Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Data Center, Enrollment Data, 2020, retrieved July 7, 2022, from https://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/enrollment.cfm. (This table was prepared July 2022.) and Ed data express McKinney-Vento Act download tool https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/download?f%5B0%5D=school_year%3A2018-2019&f%5B1%5D=school_year%3A2019-2020&f%5B2%5D=school_year%3A2020-2021

childhood programs was calculated by subtracting total number of children ages 0-3 identified as homeless and enrolled in an early childhood program from the estimated total number of children ages 0-3 experiencing homeless in each state.

Child Care

SchoolHouse Connection requested data from the Office of Child Care (OCC) on children ages 0 - 3 experiencing homelessness and enrolled in child care programs across the twenty states studied. OCC was able to provide data for seventeen of the twenty states, as the remaining 3 states (CA, NY and NC) report sample ACF-801 data (not full-population) and did not report sufficient samples to OCC to be able to include them in the analysis.

SHC requested child care data directly from the California Department of Education.

The child care enrollment data provide unadjusted average monthly counts and percentages of children who are experiencing homelessness by age and race/ethnicity based on preliminary federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020 data.

UNADJUSTED MONTHLY COUNTS

States have the discretion to report all their subsidy cases who meet CCDF-eligibility requirements (funded by pooled sources that included CCDF along with other streams like TANF and SSBG) or just the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy cases. This flexibility allows States that lack the capacity to identify the subsidy funding source for each child to be able to report case level data. OCC

has asked States to report a "pooling factor" in the annual aggregate ACF-800 report (element #13). The pooling factor enables OCC to report the number of families and children served by CCDF funds alone (as opposed to those served with CCDF funds combined with other sources of funding).

→ The States that pool funds must report all families and children receiving child care services who meet CCDF-eligibility requirements on both the ACF-801 and ACF-800. For these States, the pooling factor will be less than 100, and should be calculated based on the direct services costs for only those children and families reported (i.e. those meeting CCDF eligibility requirements). OCC (and not the State) applies the pooling to adjust the counts of families and children served with CCDF funds after the State has reported its data.

→ The States that do not pool funds must report all families and children served with CCDF funds on the ACF-801 and ACF-800 reports. For these States, a pooling factor of 100 must be reported. OCC does not make any adjustment to family and child counts after the State has reported its data.

OCC publishes adjusted numbers (children funded with CCDF dollars) on the OCC website. However, in this case, OCC provided SchoolHouse Connection with the unadjusted (that is, the pooling factor has not been applied) average monthly counts of children experiencing homelessness by age and race/ethnicity. The states that do not report a pooling factor (100%), meaning that they only report children funded with CCDF funds, are, according to OCC, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, and, for all practical purposes, Michigan as well (which uses a pooling factor of 99.9). This means that

these 6 States are not reporting the children who receive child care subsidies funded by non-CCDF dollars and are experiencing homelessness. Whereas the remaining eleven states report children receiving child care subsidies funded with CCDF and non-CCDF funds (pooling factor less than 100%).

Early Head Start

The Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) is a repository for all Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR), which Head Start grantees are required to submit each program year. SchoolHouse Connection accessed and downloaded the Family Information Report section for each of the twenty states we studied, isolating data to only Early Head Start and American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN) Early Head Start Programs. The Family Information Report contains information about children experiencing homelessness who were served during a particular program year. SHC included data on children experiencing homelessness who were served by Early Head Start and AIAN Early Head Start across the twenty states during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 program years.

Home Visiting (Parents as Teachers)

The Parents as Teachers national office pulled enrollment data for SchoolHouse Connection from each state included in the study, with the exception of Nebraska where there is no Parents as Teachers affiliate. The data reflect the number of families identified and reported by affiliates as experiencing housing

instability. The definition of housing instability that is used by Parents as Teachers is quoted immediately below and mirrors the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness.

"Housing instability – Individuals who are homeless lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residences, including those who share others' homes due to loss of housing or economic hardship; live in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; reside in emergency or transitional shelters; or reside in public or private places not designed for or used as regular sleeping accommodations."

APPENDIX B: STATE DATA TABLE

	Children Aged 0-3 Experiencing Homelessness						
State	Total (2020-2021)	Served by a Program (2020-2021)	% Served (2020-2021)	Not Served (2020-2021)	Enrolled in Early Head Start Programs (2020-2021)	Enrolled in Home Visiting Programs (2020-2021)	Enrolled in Child Care Programs (2020-2021)
Arkansas	4,891	453	9.26%	4,438	344	83	26
California	92,126	3,722	4.04%	88,404	2,756	492	474
DC	3,093	471	15.23%	2,622	171	40	260
Illinois	14,235	2,122	14.91%	12,113	556	1,206	360
Louisiana	5,504	473	8.59%	5,031	168	23	282
Maryland	5,420	350	6.46%	5,070	188	1	161
Michigan	11,882	919	7.73%	10,963	578	142	199
North Carolina	10,941	574	5.25%	10,367	445	129	Insufficient Data
Nebraska	1,011	363	35.91%	648	184	Insufficient Data	179
New Jersey	4,332	889	20.52%	3,443	329	52	508
New Mexico	3,090	227	7.35%	2,863	102	113	12
Nevada	6,825	325	4.76%	6,500	150	21	154
New York	55,973	1,059	1.89%	54,914	1,018	41	Insufficient Data
Ohio	11,581	987	8.52%	10,594	495	58	434
Oregon	7,134	610	8.55%	6,524	581	23	6
Pennsylvania	12,376	1,274	10.29%	11,102	659	322	293
South Carolina	5,862	520	8.87%	5,342	158	87	275
Texas	37,084	3,795	10.23%	33,289	969	369	2,457
Washington	14,577	1,994	13.68%	12,583	473	276	1,245
Wisconsin	6,088	1,093	17.95%	4,995	392	77	624
Totals	311,961	22,220	7.12%	289,741	10,716	3,555	7,949

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

→ [Young Children Experiencing Homelessness: An Overview](#)

→ [State Provisions to Help Children Experiencing Homelessness Access Child Care and Preschool](#)

→ [The Head Start Program Performance Standards and Homelessness](#)

→ [Federal Child Care Regulations and Homelessness](#)

→ [Self-Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)

→ [Shelter assessment tool](#)