ADVANCING EQUITY IN HOMELESS EDUCATION

Serving Students in Historically Underserved Populations

National Center for Homeless Education | September 2023

Abstract

This document from the National Center for Homeless Education provides information about:

- the American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) program's equity focus;
- populations of historically underserved students experiencing homelessness that have always been served by Education for Homeless Children and Youth programs but are prioritized in the ARP-HCY program; and
- organizations and resources to support further learning about the unique needs and experiences of these historically underserved student groups.

About the National Center for Homeless Education

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance and information center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth program.

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ADVANCING EQUITY IN HOMELESS EDUCATION: SERVING STUDENTS IN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (HR 1319, Sec. 2001), which included an $800 million reservation within the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund to address the specific and urgent needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The purpose of this program, referred to hereafter as ARP-HCY, is to strengthen the efforts of state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness, to provide them with wraparound services to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to enable them to attend school and fully participate in school activities. These funds are in addition to the annual funds provided to states through the Education of Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) program under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act).

Implementing ARP-HCY with an Equity Focus

ARP-HCY funds can support SEA and LEA efforts to promote equity and educational excellence for all students. In a Dear Colleague Letter issued April 23, 2021, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona emphasized that services provided through the ARP-HCY program should include children and youth experiencing homelessness who are members of historically underserved populations (Cardona, 2021). The letter provided a non-exhaustive list of historically underserved populations, including rural children and youth, Native American children and youth, students of color, children and youth with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQI+ youth, and pregnant, parenting, or caregiving students. Other groups, such as immigrant children and youth, refugee children and youth, and asylee children and youth, could also be considered historically underserved populations under the ARP-HCY program.

The focus of the ARP-HCY program on historically underserved populations reflects the U.S. Department of Education's 2022 Agency Equity Plan, developed in response to President Biden's 2021 Executive

Order 13985. The Agency Equity Plan stresses the need to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, academic, and other needs, and to close longstanding opportunity gaps so that all children and youth—and especially those who have been underserved or disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic—receive the educational opportunities they need to thrive (U.S. Department of Education, 2022, p.12).

> **U.S. Department of Education's 2022 Agency Equity Plan**
>
> *While always focused on serving **all** students in schools, the U.S. Department of Education has highlighted its commitment to educational equity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in its 2022 Agency Equity Plan. The plan states:*
>
> *Education has the capacity to be the "great equalizer." From pre-K through postsecondary and adult learners, education has the power to bring the American Dream within reach of every individual, lift communities, draw people together, strengthen our democracy, drive our economy, and meet our nation's vast potential. To meet this potential, our nation's education system must reckon with and address the longstanding disparities that students from underserved communities face in achieving equal education opportunity.*

Serving children and youth experiencing homelessness from historically underserved populations has always been a core component of the EHCY program because children and youth who are homeless *and* who are members of underserved populations face compounding challenges due to their circumstances. The ARP-HCY program reinforces that to use ARP-HCY funds to their greatest effect in closing gaps in opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness, educators in SEAs, LEAs, and schools must embed a focus on equity throughout their work. A first step is for educators to understand better the diverse students, families, and communities they serve, which will enable them to more effectively create services, supports, and learning environments that welcome and empower each student to succeed.

Overview of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness who are Members of Historically Underserved Populations

This document builds on the Department's Dear Colleague Letter by providing information to help educators focus on supporting students experiencing homelessness from historically underserved populations.[1] Each subsequent section in the document provides a "snapshot" of a specific historically underserved population, including:

- a general definition of the population;
- a high-level summary of publicly available data on the population;[2] and
- a list of resources and organizations that educators can consult for more information.[3]

These snapshots offer educators information that can provide a foundation for equity-focused collaboration, planning, and service provision in the use of ARP-HCY funds and EHCY funds. The report focuses on seven student populations, but these populations do not constitute an exhaustive list of historically underserved populations of students experiencing homelessness. Many students may identify with more than one of the groups outlined in this report; it is important for anyone serving students experiencing homelessness to keep in mind the possible intersectionality of the students they are supporting.

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[1] The U.S. Department of Education and NCHE offer a variety of resources to assist schools and school districts in serving children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations. Information may be found on the NCHE website under "Topics:" https://nche.ed.gov/topics/. Search for specific student populations.
[2] This information varies, as the U.S. Department of Education does not publish the same types of data on all the groups discussed in this resource. When available, data are included on identification and enrollment, student outcomes, and other data points. When publicly available data from the U.S. Department of Education are not available, information gathered from nationally recognized third-party experts is included.
[3] The organizations and resources included are only a few suggestions and are not meant to encompass all organizations that serve these student populations.

Students Experiencing Homelessness in Rural Areas

Definition

The U.S. Census Bureau defines *rural* as any population, housing, or territory not in an urban area. "Urban areas" consist of at least 2,000 housing units or at least 5,000 people.[4] According to the 2020 Decennial Census, approximately 66 million people (20% of the population) in the U.S. lived in rural areas (United States Census Bureau).

Data and Research

According to the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH), in recent years, the highest rate of growth for student homelessness has been in rural America. Between the 2013–14 and 2016–17 school years, the number of students experiencing homelessness in rural areas increased by 11% to over 162,000 students. By contrast, the number of students experiencing homelessness nationwide showed a more modest 3% increase during the same tracking period. The data indicate that in 2016–17, only 42% of rural students experiencing homelessness attend school in a district that receives a subgrant provided via the McKinney-Vento Act (ICPH, 2019).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Rural Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) — Head Start: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs
Head Start promotes school readiness for young children from families with low incomes through local community agencies. Early Head Start serves infants and toddlers under the age of three, as well as pregnant women, while Head Start focuses on children from three to five years of age and their families. The Center for American Progress highlights Head Start's role in health and family services in rural America, stating that without Head Start, many rural counties would have few center-based childcare programs. An analysis of Head Start Program Information Reports indicates that Head Start has centers in 86% of America's rural counties (Malik & Schochet, 2018).

U.S. Housing and Urban Development HUD Exchange — Rural Homelessness:

https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/rural/#strategies-for-addressing-rural-homelessness

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[4] View the U.S. Census Bureau definition here. It is important to note that even within federal grant programs, the definition of "rural" can differ slightly with regards to whether an LEA is considered a rural LEA, depending on the way the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) categorizes the schools within the LEA.

HUD operates this website to provide resources to help Continuum of Care (CoC) projects address the unique challenges of preventing homelessness in rural areas. CoC projects are regional or local planning bodies that coordinate housing and services funding for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

References and Additional Informational Resources for Rural Students Experiencing Homelessness

Carreon, E. D., Brodie, J., & Morton, M. H. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in rural America*. Chapin Hall. https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Youth-Homelessness-in-Rural-America.pdf

Family Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). (2018). *Results of support systems for rural Homeless Youth (SSRHY) Demonstration Projects 2008-2015*. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fysb/ssrhy_reportfinal_508_12_06_2018.pdf

Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH). (2019). *Student homelessness growing fastest in rural America*. https://www.icphusa.org/reports/ruralreport/

Malik, R. A. & Schochet, L. (2018). *A compass for families: Head Start in rural America*. Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/a-compass-for-families/

National Health Care for the Homeless. (2013). Rural homelessness: Identifying and understanding the hidden homeless. *In Focus*. http://councilbackup.flywheelsites.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/InFocus_June2013.pdf

Shapiro, S. M. (2022, September 29). Young and homeless in rural America. *New York Times Magazine.* https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/29/magazine/rural-homeless-students.html

United States Census Bureau (n.d.). *2020 Census Urban Areas Facts.* https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2020-ua-facts.html

Native American Students Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

Native American children and youth identify as a member of an Indian Tribe, an Eskimo, Aleut, or Alaska Native, or a descendant of an individual that identifies as a member of an Indian Tribe (section 6151(3)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)). Educators and data systems often describe Native American students as American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous, or Tribal. It is important to note that the most meaningful definition of Native American students is to, whenever best possible, refer to Native American students by their enrollment and/or tribal affiliations (e.g., a Native American student who has three affiliations by being enrolled Osage but also has additional Comanche and Pawnee affiliations).

Data and Research

Approximately 93% of Native American students attend public schools outside of reservation areas typically served by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school system. U.S. Department of Education data from school year 2020–21 show that there were 494,442 Native American students enrolled in public schools, representing 1% of all students. Schools identified 20,916 Native American students experiencing homelessness, which constitutes 1.9% of all students experiencing homelessness (ED Data Express).[5] Many Native American students live in geographically isolated areas, making it difficult to access educational supports and services.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation report, Kids Count 2023, noted the following data trends among Native American children (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023):

- 28% live in poverty;
- 58% of young children (ages 3 and 4) are not in school;
- 82% of fourth graders are not proficient in reading;
- 89% of eighth graders are not proficient in math; and
- 25% of high school students do not graduate on time.

Similarly, a 2020 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicated that in school year 2017–18, the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR)[6] for Native American students (identified in

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[5] Sources: ED Data Express, eddataexpress.ed.gov, NCHE Summary report: https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2022.pdf, p. 14. ED includes Native American and Alaska Native students in its tribal data.

[6] The ACGR is the percentage of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma within 4 years of starting ninth grade.

the report as American Indian/Alaska Native students) was 74%, compared with the national ACGR for all students of 85%. The dropout rate for Native American students in 2018 was 9.5%, compared with the national dropout rate of 5.3% (NCES, 2020).

Many Tribal students live in geographically isolated areas, making it difficult to access educational supports and services. Native American peoples hold a wide array of tribal, cultural, and linguistic diversity, as evidenced by the fact that there are nearly 600 state- and Federally recognized tribes, and many more remain unrecognized. Across these tribes are approximately 170 different indigenous languages, in addition to English (Faircloth, 2021).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Native American Students Experiencing Homelessness

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC): https://www.aihec.org/

AIHEC was established to provide a support network for the first American Indian tribally controlled colleges and has now grown to 37 Tribal colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the U.S. AIHEC provides leadership and influences policy on American Indian higher education issues, promotes and strengthens Indigenous cultures, and supports TCUs.

American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative 'Counting Homelessness on Tribal Lands':
https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/counting-homelessness-tribal-lands

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) and the Corporation for Supporting Housing (CSH) created a toolkit to enable Native American tribes to conduct their own internal homeless counts. The toolkit is part of the American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative.

National Indian Education Association (NIEA): https://www.niea.org

NIEA is a national advocacy organization for improving educational opportunities for Native American students. NIEA convenes Native organizations and allied stakeholders to promote college, career, and community readiness in Native communities.

National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Native American Organizations Serving the Community: https://www.edi.nih.gov/people/sep/na/campaigns/native-american-heritage-month-2018/native-american-organizations

NIH has created an extensive list of organizations serving Native American communities, accessible through this website.

References and Additional Informational Resources for Native American Students Experiencing Homelessness

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2023). *2023 Kids Count Data Book: State trends in child well-being*.

    https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2023kidscountdatabook-2023.pdf

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Engaging Native American youth at risk of suicide*.

    https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse-

    populations/americanindian/wellbeing/depression/

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2022). *Supporting the well-being of Native American youth.*

    https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse-populations/americanindian/youth/

Faircloth, S. C. (2021). The education of American Indian students: A brief history. *American Educator*.

    https://www.aft.org/ae/winter2020-2021/faircloth_sb1

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2020). *The condition of education 2020*. U.S.

    Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf

Students of Color Experiencing Homelessness

U.S. Department of Education data include the following subgroups of students that, when taken together, comprise the group discussed here as *students of color*: Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, Mixed Race, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Data and Research

U.S. Department of Education data from school year 2020–21 show that 26,348,238 students identified as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, Mixed Race, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were enrolled in schools, representing 53% of all students. Schools identified 810,504 students of color experiencing homelessness, constituting 73.7% of all students experiencing homelessness (NCHE, 2022).

According to a 2022 NCHE report of U.S. Department of Education data, students of color are disproportionately represented in the population of students experiencing homelessness. Two of the largest subgroups of students experiencing homelessness by race and ethnicity were Hispanic/Latino students, who represented 39% of all students experiencing homelessness but only 28% of all students enrolled, and Black students, representing 24% of all students experiencing homelessness but only 15% of all students enrolled (NCHE, 2022).

Data from youth interviews from Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count project[7] showed that the disproportionality of homelessness experiences among Black youth mirrors racial disparities documented elsewhere—for example, in school suspensions, incarceration, and foster care placement (Morton et al., 2017). Similarly, a 2019 study in Washington state showed that students of color are more likely to be suspended and receive disciplinary actions in school than other students (Building Changes).

A 2021 California study reviewed data on students experiencing homelessness from 2015-2016 using California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Data (CAASPP) and the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data Systems (CALPADS). The study found that students of color experiencing homelessness were more likely to be suspended compared to all students (Burns, 2021). Suspension rates were especially high for Black students experiencing homelessness, with more than one in every six (17%) suspended at least once during the 2015–16 school year. The suspension rate for

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[7] Voices of Youth Count is a national research and policy initiative that publishes national estimates compiled from national youth surveys, interviews with youth, and analysis of administrative data from various sources.

all Hispanic/Latino students in tested grades was 3.7%, compared with 5.6% for Hispanic/Latino students experiencing homelessness.

Organizations with Resources for Serving Students of Color Experiencing Homelessness

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): https://casel.org

CASEL is committed to advancing equity and excellence in education through social and emotional learning (SEL). Its website offers a library of equity-focused resources, including research on SEL frameworks and webinars on advancing equity through SEL.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov

The Center offers information and technical assistance to states, districts, schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning and has developed an action planning guide on addressing disparities in school discipline.

U.S. Department of Education Equity Assistance Centers (EACs): https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/program-and-grantee-support-services/training-and-advisory-services-equity-assistance-centers/

EACs provide technical assistance and training, upon request, in the areas of race, sex, national origin, and religion to public school districts and other responsible governmental agencies to promote equitable education opportunities.

References and Additional Informational Resources for Students of Color Experiencing Homelessness

Building Changes. (2019). Interviews and data reveal lack of support for students and families of color experiencing homelessness. https://buildingchanges.org/resources/lack-of-support-for-students-and-families-of-color-experiencing-homelessness/

Burns, D., Espinoza, D., Ondrasek, N., & Yang, M. (2021). *Students experiencing homelessness: The conditions and outcomes of homelessness among California students.* Learning Policy Institute. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614376.pdf

Edwards, E. J. (2020). Young, Black, successful, and homeless: Examining the unique academic challenges of Black students who experienced homelessness. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, *26*(2), 125-149. https://doi.org/10.1080/10796126.2020.1776688

Homeless Youth Connection. (2021). How race impacts youth experiencing homelessness. https://hycaz.org/race-impacts/

Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates.* Chapin Hall, University of Chicago. https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/

National Center for Homeless Education. (2020). Viewing your McKinney-Vento homeless education program through an equity lens. [Webinar]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EX9nXqJsPZU

National Center for Homeless Education. (2022). Student Homelessness in America School Years 2018-19 to 2020-21. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2022.pdf.

Students with Disabilities Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

The term "child with a disability" means a child –

    (i)   with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this chapter as "emotional disturbance"), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and

    (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (20 U.S.C. § 33(1401)).

Data and Research

U.S. Department of Education data from school year 2020–21 show that 7,182,916 students with disabilities were enrolled in public schools across all SEAs, representing 14.5% of all students. Schools identified 220,599 students with disabilities who were experiencing homelessness, which constitutes 20.3% of all students experiencing homelessness (ED Data Express). Students with disabilities are therefore disproportionately represented among the population of students experiencing homelessness.

Sullivan-Walker, et al. summarized several research studies that showed the following:

- Students experiencing homelessness who receive special services (e.g., English learners or students with disabilities) demonstrate lower levels of initial achievement in math and reading than their housed peers.
- Students experiencing homelessness exhibit behavioral, emotional, and social problems more frequently than their low-income counterparts.
- Issues such as incomplete records, missing paperwork, and chronic absenteeism often hinder special education evaluation, identification, and services for children and youth experiencing homelessness (Sullivan-Walker et al., 2017).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Students with Disabilities

Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR): https://www.parentcenterhub.org/

CPIR is a hub of information and products created for the Special Education Parent Information Center network serving families of children with disabilities. The site lists the parent training and information centers and community parent resource centers that serve each state, territory, and some underserved local communities.

WestEd National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI): https://ncsi.wested.org/

WestEd NCSI's "Transforming State Systems to Improve Outcomes for Children with Disabilities" is a website that supports states in improving systems for children and youth with disabilities. The website also houses technical assistance contact information for each state.

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: https://ectacenter.org/

The Center supports state Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs in the development of equitable, effective, and sustainable systems that support access and success for young children with disabilities and their families. The website houses data, links to upcoming events, and news.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): https://exceptionalchildren.org

The CEC is an international professional organization dedicated to improving the success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Centers: https://osepideasthatwork.org/

This website provides a comprehensive listing of OSEP centers in its technical assistance network. The centers cover various topics, including behavior, discipline, reading, and dispute resolution.

References and Additional Informational Resources for Students with Disabilities Experiencing Homelessness

Education of Individuals with Disabilities, 20 U.S.C. § 30 (1990).

https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title20/chapter33&edition=prelim

ED Data Express. (n.d.). *Data Dashboard*. U.S. Department of Education.

https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/dashboard/educators/2020-2021?sy=2781&s=1035#inexperienced_pct

Myers, M. & Popp, P. (2014). Unlocking potential. Project Hope.

https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/publications/infobriefs/documents/unlockingfamilies2014.pdf

National Center for Homeless Education. (2022). Supporting students experiencing homelessness who have disabilities: Federal provisions to increase access and success. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/disabilities-brief.pdf

National Center for Homeless Education. (2008). Navigating the intersections of IDEA and McKinney-Vento: A problem-solving process. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED522241.pdf

Sullivan-Walker, M. E., Rock, M. L., & Popp, P. A. (2017). Meeting the needs of students with disabilities experiencing homelessness: Federal, community, and educator roles. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *61*(2), 155-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2016.1228596

U.S. Department of Education, Dear Colleague Letter, November 10, 2022. (2022). https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Letter-to-State-Directors-of-Special-Education-on-Ensuring-a-High-Quality-Education-for-Highly-Mobile-Children-11-10-2022.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2008). *Questions and answers on special education and homelessness*. https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/spec-ed-homelessness-q-a.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Collaboration and coordination of the maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting program and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C programs. https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/ed-hhs-miechv-partc-guidance.pdf

Waldman, H. B. & Perlman, S. (2008, June). Homeless children with disabilities. *The Exceptional Parent*, *38*(6), 56-57.

English Learners Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

English learner (EL) – According to section 8101(20) of the ESEA, the term "English learner," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual –

(A) who is aged 3 through 21;

(B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

(C) (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;

(ii) (I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and

(II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or

(iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

(D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual –

(i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;

(ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or

(iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Data and Research

U.S. Department of Education data from school year 2020–21 show that 5,115,887 ELs were enrolled in schools, representing 10.3% of all students. Nationally, the percentage of public school students identified as ELs rose over the last two decades. The percentage was higher in 2019 than in 2010 in 42 states and the District of Columbia. ELs speak a wide variety of home languages, with Spanish being the most common, reported for 75.7% of all ELs in 2019 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

In school year 2020–21, ELs made up the second largest group of students within the homeless population enrolled in school. Schools identified 193,559 ELs experiencing homelessness, constituting 17.8% of all students experiencing homelessness (ED Data Express).

A 2021 California study reviewed state assessment data on students experiencing homelessness from 2015–16 and found that while 19% of all students experiencing homelessness met or exceeded state

standards in mathematics, fewer than 9% of ELs experiencing homelessness met or exceeded these standards (Burns et al., 2021).

A 2018 study by the Institute for Children, Homelessness & Poverty (ICHP) of students experiencing homelessness in New York City showed that ELs experiencing homelessness in elementary school were less likely to achieve fluency within three years compared to their low-income housed classmates (ICHP, 2018). On average, ELs experiencing homelessness needed more time to learn English than their housed peers. In the 2011–16 elementary cohort, 41% of EL students experiencing homelessness reached fluency in English within three years, compared to 50% of low-income housed EL students and 87% of non-low-income housed EL students (ICHP, 2018). A delay in developing English fluency can make English acquisition a challenge for EL students. When EL children learned English early—within the first three years of their education—they performed as well as or better than their classmates who already knew English when they started school (ICHP, 2018).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Students who are English Learners

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL): https://www.cal.org

The CAL promotes language learning and cultural understanding through research, resources, and policy analysis.

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE): https://nabe.org

NABE advocates for educational equity and excellence for bilingual/multilingual students in a global society, respecting cultural and linguistic diversity.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA): https://ncela.ed.gov

The NCELA collects, coordinates, and conveys a broad range of research and resources to support an inclusive approach to high-quality education for ELs.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA):

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html

OELA provides national leadership to help ensure that English Learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academic success by prompting opportunities for biliteracy or multiliteracy skills for all students.

References and Additional Informational Resources for English Learners Experiencing Homelessness

Burns, D., Espinoza, D., Ondrasek, N., & Yang, M. (2021). *Students experiencing homelessness: The conditions and outcomes of homelessness among California students.* Learning Policy Institute. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614376.pdf

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fluency drives academic success. https://www.icphusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ELL-

Brief1__finalAugust.pdf

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Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2016). *Newcomer Tool Kit.*

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/chap2.pdf

LGBTQI+ Students Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

LGBTQI+ refers to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity), or intersex. There are other commonly used variations of the acronym that refer to sexual or gender identity.

Data and Research

Choi et al. (2015) reported from a survey of providers of homeless youth services that sexual and gender minority youth are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness, have been homeless longer, and face more mental and physical health problems. In a national survey, Morton et al. (2018) found that young adults ages 18 to 25 who identified as LGBTQI+ had experienced homelessness within the last 12 months at more than twice the rate of their heterosexual peers who identified as their birth gender ("cisgender"). In larger, urban communities, the proportions of youth experiencing homelessness who identified as LGBTQI+ were higher than in smaller, more rural communities (Morton et al., 2018).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2022 Kids Count report noted that LGBTQI+ students face mental health challenges more often than their peers (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). These can include experiencing trauma if their families reject them due to coming out, high rates of sexual abuse, and high rates of discrimination. In 2019, some 23% of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high school students attempted suicide, compared to 6% of heterosexual high school students of all races and ethnicities.

LGBTQI+ youth reported the following reasons for not seeking mental health care: fear of discussing concerns, concerns about obtaining permission to access care, fear of not being taken seriously, lack of affordability, fear of their identity being misunderstood, and lack of transportation to a treatment site (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). For LGBTQI+ youth, homelessness or the threat of homelessness can force them into survival behaviors that jeopardize their well-being and safety (HHS, 2022).

Dettlaff et al. described studies that found the lack of stable housing experienced by transgender youth was associated with leaving school. Among runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness who remained in school, many saw school as unsafe and unaccepting of LGBTQI+ identities. One study found educational objectives, policies, and practices moot because runaway and homeless youth were most concerned with everyday realities, such as trying to find food and shelter, which the classroom did not address (Dettlaff et al., 2017).

LGBTQI+ youth experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to experiencing trauma both before and during their periods of homelessness. From interviews with LGBTQI+ youth, Morton et al. found the following:

> Individuals who identified as LGBTQI+ reported more physical harm from others versus their non-LGBTQI+ peers (62% vs. 47%) and more harm to themselves (25% vs. 15%). Identifying as LGBTQI+ was associated with much higher rates of experiencing discrimination or stigma within the family (64% vs. 37%) and outside of the family (60% vs. 37%). LGBTQI+ young people were also more likely to report exchanging sex for basic needs (27% vs. 9%) and having been forced to have sex (38% vs. 15%) (Morton et al., 2018).

Organizations with Resources for Serving LGBTQI+ Students

PFLAG: https://pflag.org

With chapters in all 50 states, PFLAG provides confidential peer support, education, and advocacy to LGBTQI+ people, their parents and families, and allies.

True Colors United: https://truecolorsunited.org

True Colors United works to end homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth by creating systemic change.

The Trevor Project: https://www.thetrevorproject.org

The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQI+ young people ages 13-24.

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Pregnant, Parenting, and Caregiving Students Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

Some students are youth who are *pregnant or parenting* their own child, while other students may serve as a *caregiver* and are responsible for providing direct care for a younger sibling or other family member, including one or more parents.

Data and Research

A 2018 Voices of Youth Count report on pregnant and parenting youth in the U.S. included the following findings based on its research:[8]

- Pregnancy and parenthood are common among youth experiencing homelessness.
- A substantial number of young parents experiencing homelessness have their children with them.
- About 1.1 million children have a young parent who experienced homelessness in the past year.
- Relatively few homeless service providers serve minor parents.
- Pregnancy and parenthood may increase the risk of youth homelessness (Dworsky et al., 2018).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Pregnant, Parenting, and Caregiving Youth

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb

The Children's Bureau partners with federal, state, tribal, and local agencies to improve the overall health and well-being of the nation's children and families.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of the Administration for Children & Families, Office of Head Start: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs

Head Start programs support children's growth from birth to age 5 through services that support early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Head Start staff actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of the Administration for Children & Families, Early Head Start: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/early-head-start-programs

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[8] Voices of Youth Count is a national research and policy initiative that compiles information and data from national youth surveys, interviews with youth, and analysis of administrative data from various sources. For a full list of the data sources, see https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-Pregnant-and-Parenting-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf, p. 5.

Early Head Start (EHS) programs serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3 and pregnant women. EHS programs provide intensive, comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and to pregnant women and their families.

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Immigrant, Refugee, and Asylee Students Experiencing Homelessness

Definition

Under Section 3201(5) of the ESEA, an *immigrant* student is a student aged three through 21 who was not born in the United States and has not attended a school in the U.S. for more than three full academic years. A *refugee* student is one who fled their home country from fear of persecution (this could be due to race, religion, nationality, or social/political opinions or ties) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2023). Refugees may have experienced displacement for a long time before arriving in the U.S. (NCHE, 2018). An *asylee* student is one who meets the definition of a refugee who is already living in the United States or who is seeking admission at a port of entry during their initial immigration process (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2023).

There are many cases where an immigrant, refugee, or asylee student's living arrangement meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness; in these cases, the student would be eligible for support under the Act. For example, refugee or asylee students may be temporarily resettled in hotels upon arrival in the United States. These students would be eligible for McKinney-Vento services because they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Data and Research

The process of moving to a new country poses significant academic, cultural, and psychological challenges for students and families, especially under the circumstances of being refugees or asylees. Even immigrants with significant professional experience in their own country may need to spend time and resources on English language acquisition, retake courses, or pass additional licensing exams. In general, lower incomes during the transition and resettling periods may result in families experiencing housing instability and possibly living in situations that meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

A Center for Immigration Studies analysis of Census Bureau data found that:
- 11 million public school students in 2021 were from immigrant-headed households and accounted for approximately one in four students in public schools.
- Immigrant-headed households are often in areas of high poverty. In 2021, 21% of public school students from immigrant-headed households lived in poverty (Center for Immigration Studies, 2023).

Organizations with Resources for Serving Immigrant, Refugee, and Asylee Youth

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS): https://brycs.org/

BRYCS is the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) national technical assistance provider on refugee child welfare. BRYCS assists service providers from refugee resettlement agencies, service agencies, and community-based organizations.

ORR - Unaccompanied Children Program: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/uc

ORR is the office responsible for the care and placement of unaccompanied children in the United States. ORR has a variety of fact sheets and data available on its website related to unaccompanied children.

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Conclusion

The availability of ARP-HCY funds provides an opportunity for states, districts, and schools to address the challenges of COVID-19. The influx of funds can improve the identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness and provide them with services, supports, and learning environments that welcome and empower each student to succeed. ARP-HCY also provides an opportunity for an increased focus on the diverse characteristics of students experiencing homelessness and the disparate and often

compounded needs of those whose homelessness intersects with being a member of a historically underserved community. The information and data in this overview provide a snapshot of several groups of historically underserved populations of students, who often experience higher rates of homelessness. These snapshots offer a foundation from which educators can continue learning about the diverse students, families, and communities they serve and help educators build their skills to meet the needs of *all* students, including those in historically underserved populations.

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