Report to the President and Congress
on the Implementation of the
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

October 2020

Executive Summary

This report, submitted pursuant to section 724(i) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act), provides information on the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program authorized under the McKinney-Vento Act, and describes activities that the U.S. Department of Education (Department) has undertaken to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Specifically, the Department is required to submit a report on the following:

(1) The education of homeless children and youths; and
(2) The actions of the Secretary and the effectiveness of the programs supported under the ECHY program.

Therefore, this report provides an overview of the EHCY program and the Department's main activities in support of the program during 2016-2020, as well as data on the program's performance. The first section provides an overview of the program, and the second and third sections cover efforts related to technical assistance and interagency collaboration activities. The final section on EHCY program data outlines the Department's performance management to improve educational access and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The latest performance data that are publicly available are referenced in the appendix.

Since the EHCY program was last reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, States and local educational agencies (LEAs or districts) have continued to make progress in reducing the barriers that homeless children and youth face in being identified and in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. At the same time, demand for these services has increased significantly since the last report was issued in 2006. There has been a 122 percent increase in the number of students enrolled in LEAs who have been identified and reported as homeless between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 school years, increasing from 679,724 to 1,508,265 students. New provisions in the reauthorized program have prompted States and LEAs to focus on improving the identification of students experiencing homelessness and addressing their unique educational needs from early childhood education to their transition to post-secondary education. These new provisions have also facilitated the expansion of national, State, and local interagency coordination and collaboration. This report highlights many related technical assistance activities at the Federal level.

The performance data that the Department has collected on the academic achievement of students experiencing homelessness indicate that these students perform at lower levels than many other subgroups of students, including students who are economically disadvantaged. Since reauthorization of the EHCY program, the Department has also collected data on graduation rates and chronic absenteeism for students experiencing homelessness. These new performance measures and their availability at the LEA and school levels have enabled the Department to provide additional technical assistance, in new focus areas, to States to help them improve the performance and educational outcomes of students experiencing homelessness.

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Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the education of homeless children and youths, the actions of the Secretary to support this student population, and to provide information on the performance of the Department's EHCY program.

This report focuses on the following key topics:
   (1) An overview of the EHCY program following its reauthorization in 2015;
   (2) The Department's activities to support State and LEA implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act, including technical assistance and collaboration with other Federal agency programs; and
   (3) Data on State and LEA McKinney-Vento programs.

Overview of the EHCY program

The EHCY program of the McKinney-Vento Act, first authorized in 1987, is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. In the 1980s, there was an increase in families and children experiencing homelessness and research indicated that nearly half of these children were not enrolled in school.[1] Furthermore, these children frequently changed schools, as it was often difficult to enroll in a new school or remain in the school they had been attending without a fixed, regular address. Thus, there was a trend toward LEAs creating separate public schools for homeless students. Since 2001, however, the statute prohibits separate schools for homeless students, except for those existing schools in four exempt counties. Currently, only one such school remains. The EHCY program, which allocates McKinney-Vento Act funds to State educational agencies (SEAs) to carry out State-level activities and award subgrants to LEAs, was created to address these challenges and provide other educational support and coordinated services for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

In comparison to homeless assistance programs administered by other Federal agencies, the EHCY program is broad in its geographical reach, administers a comprehensive definition of "homelessness," serves a large number of students, and affords considerable educational rights to eligible children and youth. Since the last report to Congress was submitted in 2006, the total number of homeless children and youths identified by LEAs has increased by 122 percent, from 679,724 to 1,508,265, between the 2006-2007 and 2017-2018 school years. To address the challenges of high rates of school mobility and losses in academic achievement due to disrupted schooling and school changes, the McKinney-Vento Act provides a broad definition of homelessness for this school-aged population that includes those sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other reasons (i.e., doubled-up homeless students), as well as those residing in hotels or motels due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations. The other parts of the EHCY definition of homelessness match those used by homeless assistance programs of other agencies under the McKinney-Vento Act—namely, individuals residing in shelters or unsheltered situations. The EHCY definition is also used by other Federal programs that target or prioritize serving homeless children and youth, such as Title I, Part A of

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[1] A 1987 study conducted by the Child Welfare League of America found that approximately 43% of homeless children and youth did not attend school. Child Welfare League of America, Study of Homeless Children and Families: Preliminary Findings (1987).

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, both administered by the Department; Head Start and the Child Care Development Fund, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); and School Nutrition Programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This report highlights the most recent developments in the EHCY program since the 2015 reauthorization relating to policy and guidance, technical assistance, and interagency collaboration. The final section on EHCY program data provides a summary of the performance data that are being reported on students experiencing homelessness at the State, district, and school levels. EHCY program staff at all levels are now better able to analyze the data and provide targeted technical assistance and monitoring to States and LEAs, with the aim of improving the performance and outcomes of students experiencing homelessness.

Administering and Funding the EHCY Program

The EHCY program provides formula grants to SEAs. All States receive these grants annually from the Department and must comply with all McKinney-Vento Act requirements, including the requirements to: (1) establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth; (2) develop and carry out a State plan for the education of homeless children; and (3) make subgrants to LEAs to support the education of those children.[2] Moreover, all LEAs must comply with McKinney-Vento Act requirements, regardless of whether an LEA receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant, including the requirement to designate a homeless liaison and report certain data to the SEA.[3] The Department administers and oversees the program, provides technical assistance to SEAs, LEAs, and the public, collects performance data, and coordinates with staff at other Federal agencies with programs serving people experiencing homelessness.

The Department allocates program funds to States through a formula based on each State's share of funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA. By statute, a State may not receive less than $150,000, or 0.25 of one percent of the funds appropriated under section 726 of the McKinney-Vento Act, or the amount of the State's fiscal year (FY) 2001 allocation, whichever is greatest. In FY 2020, Congress appropriated $101,500,000 for the EHCY program, and allocations to States ranged from a minimum of $253,750 to a maximum of $12,204,082. Program funds are also reserved for the outlying areas (0.1 percent of a fiscal year's appropriation) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) of the Department of the Interior (one percent of a fiscal year's appropriation).[4] In addition, the Department is authorized to reserve funds to provide technical assistance (if requested by a State) and conduct evaluation and dissemination activities. For FY 2020, this amount was $1,496,000.

From its allocation, a State may reserve up to 25 percent for State-level activities and must use remaining funds to make subgrants to LEAs. LEAs may use subgrant funds for activities such as providing enriched supplemental instruction, transportation, professional development, referrals

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[2] For additional information about SEA requirements, see sections 722(f)-(g) and 723(a) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

[3] For additional information about these requirements, see especially section 722(g)(6)(C) and sections 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) and 722(f)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

[4] Current and archived allocations to States are available at https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/tables.html.

to health care, and other services to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless children, including preschool-aged children, and youth.[5]

The EHCY program is broad in scope and its service mandate. There are approximately 18,000 LEAs with designated local liaisons and approximately 3,000 LEAs are covered by regional or single subgrants.[6] In addition, hundreds of children and youth who are homeless go through enrollment dispute resolution procedures at the LEA or SEA levels, with some complaints and other inquiries coming to the Department for technical assistance. To support Department staff in this work, the Department has contracted a National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) since 1998 to assist in the management of the program, particularly related to the provision of technical assistance. NCHE has supported Department staff in handling inquiries from the public, developing technical assistance products, conducting topical webinars for stakeholders, and presenting at national, regional, State, and local conferences. Subsequent sections in this report describe NCHE's activities in more detail.

Policy and Guidance Updates Subsequent to the 2015 Reauthorization of the EHCY Program

The 2015 reauthorization of the EHCY program expanded the requirements of coordinated services for children and youth experiencing homelessness in several ways. First, the reauthorization expanded the definition of "school of origin" to include preschools and receiving schools (i.e., the school served by a feeder school), which means that students experiencing homelessness can stay in their school of origin, including preschools and receiving schools, and be transported there until the end of the school year in which they became permanently housed.[7] Other significant changes were made to State plan requirements and SEA public reporting requirements for homeless students, both of which are described below. The overall scope of services to be provided expanded from primarily serving students in kindergarten through grade 12, to including new requirements that apply to LEA-administered preschool programs[8] and the transition to postsecondary education for unaccompanied homeless youth.[9] In addition, coordination requirements with other Federal programs were strengthened, including coordination with Title I, Part A (Title I) of the ESEA and special education programs administered by the Department and homeless assistance administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Finally, the ESSA removed "awaiting foster care placement" from the definition in EHCY of "homeless children and youths."[10]

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[5] Funds reserved under Title I, Part A to serve homeless students may also be used for these activities. For more information on the Title I, Part A homeless reservation, please see the following letter at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/letterforessatitleialeahomelesssetaside.pdf.

[6] These numbers are annually reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report and the National Data Summary referenced in Appendix A.

[7] For additional detail about the school of origin requirements, see sections 722(g)(1)(J)(iii) and 722(g)(3)(A)-(B) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

[8] Sections 721(1), 722(g)(1)(F)(i), and 722(g)(3)(I)(i) of the McKinney-Vento Act clarify that, to the extent that an LEA offers a public education to preschool children, the LEA must meet the McKinney-Vento Act requirements for homeless children in preschool.

[9] For more information on the requirements related to the transition to postsecondary education for unaccompanied homeless youth, see sections 722(g)(1)(K) and 722(g)(6)(A)(x)(III).

[10] For more information on children and youths "awaiting foster care placement," please see the Department's non-regulatory guidance at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.docx, question A-2.

Due to the substantive nature of the amendments to the EHCY program, the Department issued updated policy guidance before the new requirements took effect on October 1, 2016. This guidance highlighted and provided greater detail on the significant number of changes to the EHCY program under ESSA. The guidance documents include:

- A *Federal Register* notice[11] in March 2016 that made recommendations about how States may:
    1) Assist LEAs in implementing the provisions related to homeless children and youth.
    2) Review and revise policies and procedures that may present barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth and their enrollment, attendance, and success in school.
- Guidance documents released in July 2016, including:
    1) Non-regulatory guidance (updated in 2017 and 2018).[12]
    2) Homeless student guidance fact sheet (for LEA personnel).[13]
    3) A public notice for Federal agencies and their local grantees serving homeless children and youth.[14]

These documents, in particular the non-regulatory guidance, inform the topics of Department technical assistance concerning the EHCY program to SEAs, LEAs, Federal agencies, and other stakeholders.

ESSA also made several changes to the program requirements pertaining to homeless children and youth. These changes included public reporting by SEAs and LEAs of homeless student performance as a subgroup on state assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics and science as well as four-year and any extended year adjusted cohort graduation rates.[15] Furthermore, all LEAs are now required to reserve Title I funds to serve homeless students, even if all the schools in the LEA are served by Title I funds.[16] Under the amended statutory language, this set-aside may be based on a needs assessment and can be used to pay the salary of the LEA homeless liaison and the excess costs of transportation to the school of origin for students experiencing homelessness. Finally, LEAs applying for an EHCY subgrant must describe how they plan to use their Title I set-aside to serve homeless children and youth and how the LEA will use their EHCY subgrant to leverage resources, including by maximizing other funding for the position of the liaison and the provision of transportation.[17]

In addition to the notices and updated guidance mentioned above, Department staff engaged with States over many months to help them prepare, submit, and revise their consolidated State plans,

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[11] The *Federal Register* notice is available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-03-17/pdf/2016-06073.pdf.
[12] The Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (updated in August 2018) is available at
https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.docx.
[13] The Homeless Student Guidance Fact Sheet for LEA personnel is available at
https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160315ehcyfactsheet072716.pdf.
[14] The public notice is available at www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/160726.html.
[15] ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii-iii) outlines the reporting requirements related to the homeless student subgroup.
[16] See ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A) for additional information about the Title I, Part A set-aside requirement and the 2018 letter explaining it at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/letterforessatitleialeahomelesssetaside.pdf.
[17] See section 723(c)(3)(G)(-H) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

which covered ESEA formula grant programs as well as the EHCY program. Every State's consolidated plan was reviewed by the Department as well as by external peers.[18]

In this regard, NCHE published a summary of the key ways States addressed each requirement of the EHCY section of the State plans; the summary also included information on ways that some States have developed innovative approaches to meet certain requirements.[19] In particular, States developed innovative procedures for new requirements such as to allow for full and partial credit transfer for homeless secondary school students enrolling in new LEAs within or out of State in the middle of the school year, as well as practices to remove barriers to enrollment and retention due to fees, fines and absences.

Activities of the Department to support State and LEA implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act

In addition to the guidance documents mentioned above, the Department and NCHE provide regular technical assistance to support States, LEAs, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the EHCY program. The Department and NCHE provide technical assistance through responses to grantees and stakeholders, in-person training and conferences, virtual learning opportunities, the publication of technical assistance toolkits and reports, and strategic collaboration with other Federal agencies and organizations supporting children and youth experiencing homelessness. This section describes these technical assistance activities in greater detail.

Technical Assistance to State and Local Education Agencies Subsequent to Reauthorization

Grantees and other stakeholders (including parents and students themselves) frequently reach out to the Department and NCHE with questions or to request support. The Department and NCHE each maintain email inboxes to field such stakeholder inquiries and work collaboratively to coordinate responses.[20] NCHE also maintains a Homeless Education Helpline and fields approximately 205 monthly inquiries through its email inbox and the Homeless Education Helpline.[21] Through these inboxes and helplines, the Department and NCHE frequently serve as intermediaries, connecting non-grantee stakeholders (such as parents, students, and school-based staff) to their respective State Coordinators or local liaisons for assistance.

The Department and NCHE also provide in-person technical assistance to grantees and other stakeholders. For example, the organizations host an annual national conference to provide State Coordinators and other SEA staff contacts the opportunity to network and engage in professional

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[18] All materials related to the consolidated State plans and review process, including the State plan requirements established by the Department in March 2017 and the peer review comments, can be found at https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/.

[19] The NCHE summary of McKinney-Vento in ESSA State Plans can be accessed at https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/M-V-in-ESSA-State-Plans-Style-2.pdf.

[20] The Department fields emails from grantees and other stakeholders through its HomelessEd@ed.gov email address. NCHE fields inquiries through its Homeless@serve.org email address.

[21] Stakeholders can request support directly through NCHE's Homeless Education Helpline at 1-800-308-2145. In an average month, NCHE fields approximately 55 inquiries from SEA staff, 43 inquiries from parents or caretakers, 21 inquiries from school staff, and 12 inquiries from students. NCHE receives additional monthly inquiries from other stakeholder groups, including institutes of higher education, homeless shelters, community organizations, and researchers.

learning.[22] In conjunction with the annual meeting, NCHE annually holds a full-day training for newer State Coordinators to both help these practitioners understand their primary responsibilities and introduce them to key resources available to support their work.[23] Staff from the Department and NCHE frequently attend conferences hosted by partner organizations to facilitate presentations and provide updates about the EHCY program.[24]

For example, NCHE annually presents at approximately 35 national, regional, and State conferences on topics related to homeless education. Finally, NCHE provides multi-day, in-person training to approximately ten State grantees each year. NCHE tailors these trainings to meet the specific needs of State grantees; the trainings focus on various topics related to the education of homeless children and youth, including, for example, the identification of homeless children and youth, and strategies for interagency collaboration to support homeless students.

In addition to in-person supports, the Department and NCHE facilitate numerous virtual technical assistance opportunities. For example, NCHE hosts quarterly webinars for State Coordinators, which cover various topics related to the implementation of the EHCY program. Furthermore, NCHE hosts recurring webinars for State Coordinators, local liaisons, and school-based staff that cover various topics related to supporting homeless children and youth.[25] NCHE hosts approximately two of these recurring webinars each week, and approximately 1,700 stakeholders (including State Coordinators, local liaisons, parents, school-based staff, and students) attend these webinars each year.[26] NCHE also provides individualized virtual technical assistance each year to support States in their review of their State and local homeless education data.[27] During these calls, NCHE experts work with State Coordinators to review data workbooks and interactive data maps, and NCHE staff design these calls to meet the unique data-related needs of each grantee. Finally, the Department and NCHE both maintain websites and stakeholder listservs to disseminate information and resources to grantees and stakeholders.[28]

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[22] The Department and NCHE hosted the 2020 State Coordinators Meeting on February 25-28, 2020. This convening was attended by approximately 100 stakeholders, including SEA staff from approximately 43 States and the Bureau of Indian Education, the District of Columbia, and Guam. Representatives from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also attended the conference to serve as presenters and thought partners. Additional information about the national meeting and session materials are available at https://nche.ed.gov/state-coordinators-meeting/.

[23] NCHE hosted the 2020 annual meeting for new State Coordinators on February 24 (the day before the 2020 State Coordinators Meeting). Materials from the meeting are available at https://nche.ed.gov/state-coordinators-meeting/.

[24] Staff presentations at conferences and events hosted by Federal partners, including, for example, the annual Migrant Education State Directors' Meeting. Staff also present at events sponsored by non-Federal partner organizations, including conferences hosted by the National Network for Youth, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness.

[25] NCHE's webinar series covers a number of distinct topics related to homeless education, including sessions such as *McKinney-Vento 101: Understanding the Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness* and *Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness*. Additional information, including registration links and handouts, for all webinars in NCHE's recurring training series is available at https://nche.ed.gov/group-training/.

[26] Participants on these recurring webinars receive a certificate of completion, and many practitioners use these certificates to meet their State or district professional learning requirements.

[27] Under its contract with the Department, NCHE is required to facilitate these data-focused calls with at least 48 of the 53 State Coordinators each year.

[28] The Department's EHCY program website is available at https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/education-for-homeless-children-and-youths-grants-for-state-and-local-activities/. NCHE's website is available at https://nche.ed.gov/. Over 20,500 visitors access NCHE's website each year. The Department maintains a listserv for SEA grantees. NCHE maintains a listserv for both grantees and stakeholders and NCHE's listserv has approximately 2,000 unique subscribers. An archive of NCHE's listserv

NCHE's website makes many publications accessible to the public, and NCHE publishes approximately six new publications per year, covering various topics related to homeless education. (These publications are typically three to four pages in length and are developed as tip sheets or research summaries.) Recent NCHE publications have covered topics as varied as full and partial credit accrual,[29] the high rates of chronic absenteeism among homeless students,[30] and the transporting of students experiencing homelessness to school-sponsored extracurricular activities and events.[31]

In addition to releasing these new publications each year, NCHE also maintains and updates its most popular publications. For example, NCHE has revised and updated two of its most popular resources—the *State Coordinators' Handbook* and the *Homeless Liaison Toolkit*—to include the ESSA amendments to the EHCY program. [32] (These publications provide a comprehensive suite of resources designed to support State Coordinators and local liaisons in the execution of their essential duties and are among the most frequently downloaded resources on the NCHE website.[33]) Finally, in addition to its topical publications and toolkits, NCHE annually maintains and disseminates public awareness materials (including brochures, booklets, and posters) to schools and other organizations that serve homeless children and youth.[34] NCHE disseminates approximately 180,000 copies of these public awareness materials each year.

Recent Interagency Collaboration with Other Federal Programs Serving Homeless Children and Youth

The Department works closely with other Federal agencies to prevent and end homelessness, especially for families, children, and youth. Much of this activity has been coordinated through the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). In recent years, the Department has been a very active participant in USICH's interagency initiatives. Various officers of the Department have served as Vice Chairs (2016 and 2018), and Assistant Secretary Frank Brogan of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, served as Chair in 2019. The Department has also been engaged in several bilateral coordination initiatives with HUD and HHS. The

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messages, dating back to 2016, is available at http://archive.benchmarkemail.com/National-Center-for-Homeless-education--NCHE-.

[29] NCHE's publication entitled *Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students* is available at https://nche.ed.gov/credit-accrual/. This resource describes school district responsibilities related to removing barriers to credit accrual and examines strategies for removing such barriers.

[30] *In School Every Day: Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Among Students Experiencing Homelessness* explores the impact of chronic absenteeism on school and student performance and describes approaches to addressing chronic absenteeism among students experiencing homelessness. This issue brief is available at https://nche.ed.gov/chronic-absence/.

[31] This publication, entitled *Ensuring Full Participation in Extracurricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness*, describes school districts' responsibilities to ensure students experiencing homelessness can fully participate in extracurricular activities. This resource is available at https://nche.ed.gov/extra-curricular/.

[32] The *State Coordinator's Handbook* is available at https://nche.ed.gov/state-coordinators-handbook/, while the *Homeless Liaison Toolkit* is available at https://nche.ed.gov/homeless-liaison-toolkit/.

[33] These resources are collectively downloaded approximately 8,500 times each year. The *Local Liaison Toolkit* is one of the most frequently downloaded resources on the NCHE website, with over 8,000 downloads annually.

[34] These materials, which describe the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness, are provided free of charge to grantees and stakeholders at the beginning of each school year. (Throughout the school year, stakeholders can request additional copies of the materials for a nominal fee.) Public awareness materials are available in both English and Spanish. Additional information about NCHE's public awareness materials, as well as PDF copies of materials, is available at https://nchehelpline.org/.

Department, in coordination with NCHE, has been able to integrate technical assistance and data analysis into these interagency activities.

One significant area of progress across agencies has been in the analysis of data on homeless individuals who are or may be served by multiple programs. Building on many years of interagency data coordination through USICH, and following the 2015 reauthorization of the EHCY part of the McKinney-Vento Act, which included increased interagency coordination requirements, the Department began conducting more technical assistance focused on data coordination between LEAs and the grantees of the other main Federal agencies with programs serving children, youth and families experiencing homelessness.[35] The main HUD and HHS grants are provided to local agencies, such as county and city governments, or non-profit organizations. As a result, the Department's LEA-level data has been useful for coordinating services at the local level for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

HUD's main grant program for planning homeless assistance at this level is called the Continuums of Care (CoC) Program. Accordingly, NCHE developed a tip sheet addressing the protections for minors under age 18 under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and several program profiles of effective LEA-CoC or community coordination.[36] The Department also released an LEA-CoC data crosswalk in 2016, which was updated in 2018.[37] These technical assistance efforts and the release of privacy-protected LEA-level data on homeless children and youth have supported these interagency efforts to improve local coordination overall.

Concurrent with the newly reauthorized EHCY program, in late 2015, USICH and HUD invited the Department to advise them on, and provide support to, HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP).[38] Through NCHE, the Department provides coordinated technical assistance and evaluation services. HUD has funded three rounds of YHDP grants, and NCHE staff engage with YHDP grantees by request as they develop coordinated community plans to ensure the participation of school districts and institutions of higher education, and that education is a part of the case management for unaccompanied homeless youth served by the program.[39]

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[35] For example, ESSA amendments to EHCY authorize local liaisons to affirm that a homeless child or youth they have identified, also meets the eligibility requirements for HUD-funded assistance. ESSA also strengthened the rights and services for young children and unaccompanied homeless youth who are homeless, including those with disabilities, as well as strengthened the coordination requirements of HHS and the Department to serve these subpopulations. See the EHCY non-regulatory guidance, Sections V and VI, at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.docx.

[36] The tip sheet is available at https://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/ehcy-interagency-data-disclosure.pdf and the Point in Time Count collaboration brief is available on NCHE's website at http://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PIT-Count-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.docx. Other housing collaboration briefs are at https://nche.ed.gov/housing/.

[37] The crosswalk can be accessed at http://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/12.7.18Crosswalk-of-Key-Federally-funded-Child-and-Youth-Homeless-Contacts-1.xlsx.

[38] YHDP focuses on unaccompanied homeless youth from ages 14-24, although CoCs can chose to focus only on those age 18 and over. Points are awarded for LEA collaboration in applications; however, the mandatory participants are a lead youth-serving agency and local child welfare agency. For more information concerning the YHDP program, please see https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/yhdp/.

[39] For more information about YHDP Community Resources including Coordinate Community Plans (CCPs), please see https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/yhdp/community-resources/#yhdp-coordinatED-community-plans.

Both the Department and HUD have shared, and will continue to share, insights from this multi-year demonstration program more broadly with agencies serving unaccompanied homeless youth. For example, in 2019, HUD and NCHE issued a "lessons learned" summary from round one of YHDP, and NCHE issued a profile on a rural grantee in northwest Michigan.[40] Education and employment are two of the core outcomes of the YHDP program. A preliminary analysis of the program has found that the provision of targeted and general technical assistance by NCHE has resulted in many more YHDP grantees focusing on secondary and post-secondary education outcomes for the youth that they serve, as well as improved coordination with LEAs and institutions of higher education.

In addition to these interagency projects, the Department has undertaken several other cross-agency technical assistance efforts with other Federal agencies:

- The Department and HHS collaborated in releasing five annual volumes of Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles since 2016.[41]
- The Department and NCHE staff coordinated with HHS' Family and Youth Service Bureau, which operates the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program, to make presentations at grantee and national association conferences almost every year. One recent product of this collaboration is a brief on how LEAs have collaborated with local RHY grantees to improve educational outputs and outcomes for unaccompanied homeless youth.[42]
- The Department, including the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, which administers the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act programs and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor, has collaborated across these programs on an NCHE product and USICH webinar about the service provisions and planning and reporting requirements for unaccompanied homeless youth in them.[43]

Data on EHCY Programs

The Department collects data and information annually from each State, including information for every LEA and school enrolling students experiencing homelessness. In addition, the 2015 reauthorization of the ESEA included a requirement in Title I that each State and local report card include homeless students in the student performance data on statewide reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments. While the Department has collected achievement data on homeless students since 2005, the 2015 reauthorization added the requirement that SEAs and LEAs report on homeless student graduation rates;[44] these data support the key education outcome of graduating on time. States must report on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation

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[40] The NCHE lessons-learned brief from the first round of YHDP is available at http://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NCHE-YHDP-Round-1-Lessons-Learned-brief.pdf. The brief about the Northwest Michigan YHDP is available at http://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Rural-YHDP-Profile_NW-MI.pdf. HUD's lessons learned brief is available at https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-Lessons-Learned.pdf

[41] To view HHS' Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles of 2016 and 2017, and those of ED in 2018, 2019, and 2020, see https://www2.ED.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html#homeless and https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children.

[42] For more information, please see https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/rhy-lea-collab.pdf.

[43] For more information, please see https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/labor-ed-collab.pdf and https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ED-DOL-USICH-webinar-HANDOUT.pdf.

[44] See ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii-iii) for the requirements related to publicly reporting academic performance and graduation rates of the subgroup of homeless students.

rate (ACGR) and may also report on extended-year (e.g., five and six-year) cohort graduation rates.

The Department has also been collecting chronic absenteeism data on homeless students at the school level since the 2016-2017 school year. The Department is planning to start reporting in fiscal year 2021 new national performance measures under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) on the four-year ACGR and chronic absenteeism rates, as well as to make these data public at the State and LEA levels. Beginning in fall 2019, the Department displayed enrollment and achievement data in LEA maps on ED Data Express, data that NCHE had also previously been providing to State Coordinators for the past several years.[45]

Prior to enactment of ESSA, the Department had already begun working to strengthen data collections on homeless students. In 2011, the Department commissioned a national study of the EHCY program. The final report, released in 2015, indicated that State Coordinators wanted more technical assistance on data collection, data quality review, data analysis and display, and the use of performance data to improve outcomes for homeless students and program performance.[46]

Since 2014, the Department, through NCHE, has been providing technical assistance to EHCY State Coordinators on the review of LEA-level data. That assistance built the coordinators' capacity to review data workbooks and maps of homeless student demographics and performance by LEA. NCHE has provided maps to them with all LEA boundaries in the State where LEAs are shaded different colors for different percentage ranges of homeless student enrollment or grade-level proficiency in reading and mathematics. Since 2017, NCHE has also provided State Coordinators with workbooks that have data dashboards to allow comparisons between homeless students and other student demographic groups, such as economically disadvantaged students or the general student population. These dashboards and maps provide States with an opportunity to see patterns across the State in order to target monitoring and technical assistance in the most effective way to improve student and program performance.

The Department has also made more of its homeless education data publicly available to other stakeholders in recent years. Given that homelessness varies by community, making local homeless data publicly available provides tools for State and local leaders, community members, and other stakeholders to improve the awareness and coordination of services. School-level achievement data on homeless students (as well as other subgroups) has been available on the Federal government's open data platform since 2012, and through the Department's ED*Facts* Initiative website since 2014.[47] In 2016, the Department began publicly releasing LEA homeless student enrollment and demographic data. Finally, beginning in 2019, the Department made LEA maps of homeless student demographics and achievement available on ED Data Express.

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[45] To access the data files in ED Data Express, please see https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/.

[46] The national study of the EHCY program is available at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html#homeless.

[47] For the federal data platform website (data.gov), please see https://www.data.gov/, and for the ED*Facts* Initiative, please visit https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html.

The Department also revised its national program measures to align with the new data requirements of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, to include the ACGR and a measure of chronic absenteeism. Previous national measures had focused on the performance of students in grades three through eight enrolled in LEAs with EHCY subgrants on the annual State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics. However, these GPRA measures were only for homeless students in grades three through eight who were enrolled in LEAs with EHCY subgrants. There was no secondary school measure; the inclusion of the ACGR and chronic absenteeism data now include secondary students enrolled in all LEAs who are experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, since the rights and protections of homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Act apply regardless of whether the student lives or attends school in an LEA that receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant, the Department will also include proficiency rates for homeless students enrolled in all LEAs. The baseline measures will be from the 2018-2019 school year, and new annual targets will be set from that baseline. GPRA measures for the Department's programs can be viewed in the President's Budget Request.[48] These changes will provide a more comprehensive view of the performance of homeless students in all LEAs and grade levels.

The Department's data for the five most recently available reporting years on homeless student achievement, from the 2013-2014 to 2017-2018 school year, indicate that students experiencing homelessness perform at a lower level than many other subgroups of students, including students who are economically disadvantaged. This is true on multiple measures, including grade-level achievement in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, graduation rates, and chronic absenteeism. Conclusions from comparisons across States are difficult to make because every State has a different assessment system and criteria for graduation. Furthermore, some data submitted by States may be incomplete or have data quality issues which may impact longitudinal analyses. In addition, in analyzing trends within a State or LEA, it is difficult to evaluate the performance of homeless students because States often change standards, curriculum, assessments, and methods of administration, significantly impacting the results in those years and making it difficult to analyze trends over time. Given these caveats, national reports of homeless student performance on State assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science indicate little progress for the past five reporting years from 2013-2018, ranging between 24 and 30 percent of homeless students performing at grade level in those content areas.[49]

As for ACGRs, NCHE's national data summary has reported these calculations from the 2016-2017 school year through the present; while not all States have reported these data to the Department, the national ACGR for homeless students has remained consistent at 64 percent, with 44 SEAs reporting in the 2016-2017 school year and 49 SEAs reporting for the 2017-2018 school year. Chronic absenteeism data include school-level data on counts of all students who are chronically absent, as well as homeless students who are chronically absent. The Department will be releasing more chronic absenteeism data through the biennial Civil Rights Data Collection[50] and regular updates to ED Data Express. Ultimately, access to these new data will

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[48] The Department posts budget requests and past and future GPRA measures and performance at https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/index.html?src=ln.The EHCY program appears under heading School Improvement Programs.

[49] See the President's FY2021 Budget Request or EHCY National Data Summary for the 2017-2018 School Year with the Three-Year Comparison referenced earlier.

[50] The Civil Rights Data Collection is available at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/. Data based on a revised definition of chronic absenteeism, which is the number of students missing 10% or more of instructional time—whether excused or not during the period of enrollment— will be used from the 2017-2018 reporting year.

enable staff with McKinney-Vento duties at the Department, in SEAs, and in LEAs to better serve students experiencing homelessness and potentially improve their educational outcomes and overall performance by reducing barriers to school attendance and on-time high school graduation.

Conclusion

The Department continues to pursue the goals of the EHCY program through the provision of support to States and LEAs to address the challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. The Department has met the growing demands for guidance and technical assistance for the EHCY program; improved the quality of, and access to, data; and provided leadership in interagency collaborations. The Department remains committed to the EHCY program and the supports it provides to homeless children to help them reach their highest potential.

Appendix A.
Federal Data Summary for School Years 2015-16 through 2017-18: Education for Homeless Children and Youth, National Center for Homeless Education, January 2020 at https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18-Published-1.30.2020.pdf