



The Cost of Eliminating Homeless Education Funding

Without dedicated federal funding, 1.4 million homeless children and youth will lose access to the education, stability, and support they need to survive and succeed.

President Trump's FY2026 budget proposal calls for eliminating funding for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program. The proposal states that schools could choose to use funds from a newly created block grant to serve homeless students, but there would be no requirement to do so. As we saw with previous pandemic recovery funding, states and school districts typically do not direct resources toward homeless students unless dedicated funding is set aside for this purpose. The reality is that eliminating funding for the EHCY program would undermine critical protections that allow homeless students—including those displaced by natural disasters—to:

- Remain in their original school, even after moving outside its attendance boundaries;
- Receive transportation assistance to ensure consistent school attendance;
- Enroll in school without typically required documentation, which is often lost or unavailable due to frequent moves; and
- Access help from school district homeless liaisons, who are responsible for identifying homeless students, enrolling them, and connecting them with community resources.

Eliminating EHCY funding also would prevent homeless children and youth from accessing early childhood and postsecondary education. School district homeless liaisons play a vital role in ensuring enrollment in Head Start, Early Head Start, early intervention services under Part C of IDEA, and local preschool programs. Homeless liaisons also make determinations for purposes of FAFSA eligibility under the *FAFSA Simplification Act*, thereby allowing homeless youth to qualify as independent students for financial aid.

The EHCY program is the only federal program specifically dedicated to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend and succeed in school. Its primary goal is to remove barriers to education created by homelessness—such as frequent school and residential moves, lack of required enrollment documentation, inadequate supplies, and severe poverty. A recent [study](#) of school districts receiving dedicated funding for homeless students showed measurable improvements in student attendance and academic performance. **Without the dedicated funding and protections of the McKinney-Vento Act, nearly 1.4 million children and youth experiencing homelessness would face increased barriers to enrolling in and attending school. As a result, they would be more vulnerable to harm and exploitation, and deprived of education—their most powerful tool for escaping poverty and homelessness in adulthood.**

For these reasons, Congress should maintain the EHCY program as a distinct federal education program, and appropriate \$200 million for the EHCY program in FY2026.

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