

The National Perspective



Red, White,
and Blue Book

NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

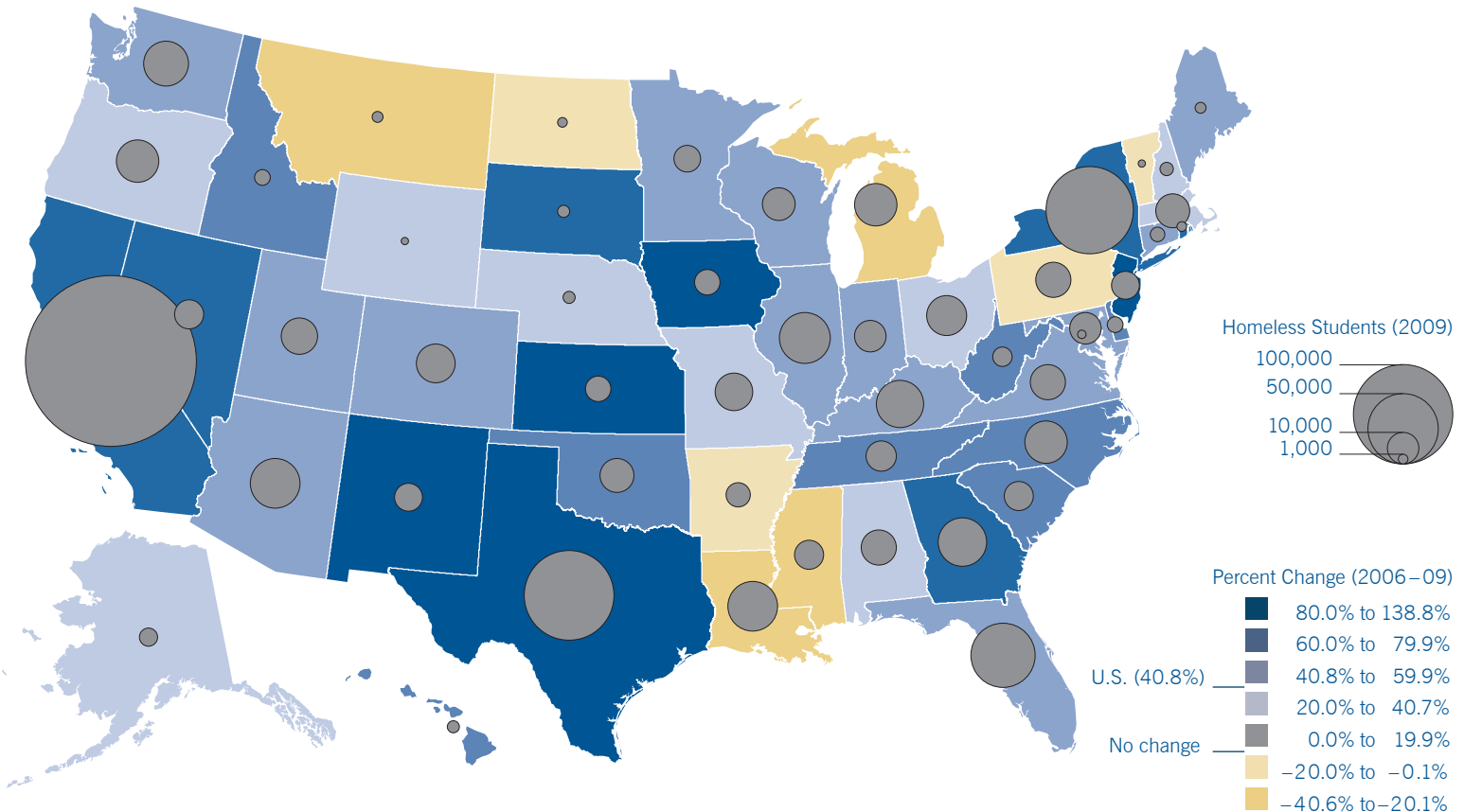
Federal Funding Essential to Finding and Aiding Homeless Students

In recent years, there has been an unparalleled rise in the number of homeless students in the United States. Between the 2006–07 and 2008–09 school years, the number of homeless students increased by 41% (from 679,724 to 956,914). The states with the most homeless students, California (288,233), Texas (80,940), and New York (76,117), witnessed substantial increases of 62%, 139%, and 73%, respectively. A 2010 National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and First Focus survey of state education departments and local school districts listed the top reasons for the increase in homeless students as the economic downturn (62%),

greater community awareness (40%), the foreclosure crisis (38%), and the noteworthy efforts of homeless school liaisons in identifying students (33%).

Across the U.S., homeless school liaisons have heightened outreach efforts to homeless students and have been particularly successful at identifying those living doubled up with family or friends, who are often more challenging to recognize. Hence, the majority of the overall nationwide increase between the 2006–07 and 2008–09 school years is due to a 44% rise in the number of those students living doubled up. In addition, economic factors stemming from

Number (2009) and Percent Change (2006–09) of Homeless Students



Source: National Center for Homeless Education, *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Data Collection Summary*, June 2010. Alaska is represented at half the scale of the other states.

on the Homefront

the recession contributed to the overall rise, including 31% and 13% increases in the number of students living in shelters and hotels or motels, respectively.

Primary Nighttime Residence (by school year and percent change)

| | 2006–07 | 2007–08 | 2008–09 | 2006–09 % change |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Shelters | 161,640 | 164,982 | 211,152 | 30.6% |
| Doubled-up | 420,995 | 502,082 | 606,764 | 44.1% |
| Unsheltered | 54,422 | 50,445 | 39,678 | -27.1% |
| Hotels/motels | 51,117 | 56,323 | 57,579 | 12.6% |
| Total | 679,724 | 794,617 | 956,914 | 40.8% |

Authorized through the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) grant is the only dedicated federal funding source to recognize, enroll, and provide services for homeless students. This financial assistance is critical to assist homeless students who developmentally and scholastically lag behind their housed peers. In fact, the number of homeless students served is directly related to the amount of available funding. For roughly every \$56 of federal dollars invested, another homeless student is identified and served (see technical notes).

Prompted by dire economic conditions and improved community awareness, homeless school liaisons have been able to reach more students despite only modest increases in EHCY funding (a 6% increase to \$65.4 million between the 2007 and 2009 federal fiscal years). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA),

however, has presented an additional \$70.0 million in stimulus funds to be disbursed over the 2009–11 federal fiscal years. With the infusion of these funds and increased awareness of identifying and serving students, it is reasonable to expect that there will be substantial increases in the number of homeless students in the 2009–10 school year.

During the first three months of the 2009–10 school year, school districts expended over half (\$38.2 million) of the ARRA stimulus funds for a total of \$103.6 million (including the EHCY monies). This essential financial assistance more than doubled the number of school districts receiving support through either program. According to the NAEHCY and First Focus survey, however, 44% of ARRA and/or EHCY recipients still report difficulty identifying homeless students. Furthermore, less than one in five school districts receive financial assistance through either ARRA or the annual EHCY allocations.

Homeless students face several unique barriers to educational success, including lack of educational continuity, transportation, school supplies, clothing, hygiene, food, and an emotionally and physically safe space. Education provides the best opportunity for these children to break the cycle of poverty. With so many homeless students yet to be identified and receive services, federal funding should be permanently increased. Investing to ensure the educational success of homeless students is more fiscally responsible than providing shelter and supportive services to adults for generations to come. ■

Source: National Center for Homeless Education, *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Data Collection Summary*, June 2010. Primary nighttime residence may not properly total for each school year.

Technical Notes

A simple ordinary least squares regression model, with the amount of state EHCY funding as the predictor and the number of homeless students per state as the response variable (controlling for school years 2006–09), explains the relationship with 80% accuracy. This analysis indicates that for every \$55.67 of federal dollars invested, another homeless student is identified and served.

Model Summary

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| R ² | 0.8015 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.7976 |
| Standard Error | 14921 |
| F | 208.58 |
| Significance (F) | .000 |

| Model | Sum of Squares | Degrees of Freedom | Mean Square |
|------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Regression | 1.393E+11 | 3 | 4.644E+10 |
| Residual | 3.451E+10 | 155 | 2.226E+08 |
| Total | 1.738E+11 | 158 | 1.100E+09 |

| Model | Coefficient | Std. Error | t | Significance | 95% Confidence Interval |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------|--------------|-------------------------|
| (Constant) | -7934.290 | 2212.038 | -3.59 | .000 | -12303.92 -3564.659 |
| Funding | .0179619 | .00072 | 24.95 | .000 | .0165397 .0193841 |

Source: National Center for Homeless Education, *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Data Collection Summary*, June 2010; U.S. Department of Education, *Education Department Budget History State Tables: FY 1980–FY 2009, President's Budget, 2010*.