Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2022-23 State Evaluation Report

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Introduction

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act Overview

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into federal law in 1987, requiring states to review and revise residency requirements for the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The McKinney Act was amended in 1990, requiring states to eliminate all enrollment barriers and provide school access and support for academic success for students experiencing homelessness. McKinney Act funds could then be used to provide direct educational services to eligible students. In 1994, the education portion of the McKinney Act was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), adding preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration. In 2001, when the law was reauthorized as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act, Title X, Part C of the ESEA), it strengthened legislative requirements by requiring all local educational agencies (LEAs) to appoint a local liaison to ensure the law is implemented effectively at the local level. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) again amended the McKinney-Vento Act in December 2015 with changes taking effect in October 2016. This report covers programming between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, and reflects the legal requirements outlined in the latest revision that began in 2016.

The McKinney-Vento Act outlines how state educational agencies must ensure that each child of an individual experiencing homelessness and each youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as other children and youth, including a public preschool education. The McKinney-Vento Act uses the following definition for "children and youth experiencing homelessness."

Homeless children and youth:

1. Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
2. Includes--
    a. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
    b. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
    c. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
    d. Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (a) through (c).

Children and youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless may also be identified as an "unaccompanied homeless youth," meaning they are not in the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. There is no age range specified for an unaccompanied youth in the federal law. The upper age range is determined by what a state defines as school age,

unless the child is in special education, in which case the upper age range is 21 years old. There is no lower age range.

The McKinney-Vento Act also outlines the rights of students experiencing homelessness, including:

1. Immediate enrollment even when records are not present;
2. Remaining in the school of origin if in the student's best interest;
3. Transportation to the school of origin; and
4. Provision of support services that promote academic success.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) implements the McKinney-Vento Act through its Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program. PDE created a state plan that outlines Pennsylvania's implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act and a Basic Education Circular to offer guidance to LEAs regarding implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. PDE's website provides information regarding homelessness and the ECYEH Program: www.education.pa.gov/homeless. Updates, as they occur to align with ESSA, are posted there as well.

Instead of providing federal McKinney-Vento Act funds directly to LEAs, Pennsylvania employs a regional model for dispersing funds. Pennsylvania is divided into eight regions. Each region has one regional coordinator whose primary responsibility is to implement the goals and objectives of the program. The regional coordinator position is filled by competitive bid on a three-year cycle. In some cases, regional coordinators subcontract for additional program staff within their region or identify intermediate unit staff to support student identification and program activities. The regional model ensures that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have the opportunity to receive services or support through the ECYEH Program.

The PDE ECYEH state coordinator is responsible for program coordination and collaboration at the state level and manages dispute resolutions among LEAs, should they occur. PDE contracts with the Center for Schools and Community (CSC), a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, to provide technical assistance to the regions and LEAs. CSC maintains a website that includes statewide directories of the ECYEH Program staff, LEA homeless liaisons, and Pennsylvania shelters for families, victims of domestic violence, and runaway youth, in addition to other relevant resources. PDE and the CSC conduct technical assistance visits for the regions and prepare a comprehensive report of each region's results for continuous program improvement.

Additionally, the state office, through the CSC, contracts with external educational professionals who monitor LEA implementation and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and ESSA and submit their reports back to the CSC and PDE.

The goals of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

1. Ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll, participate, and have the opportunity to succeed in school;
2. Ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state; and
3. Eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers through local best practices and the authorized activities of the McKinney-Vento Act.

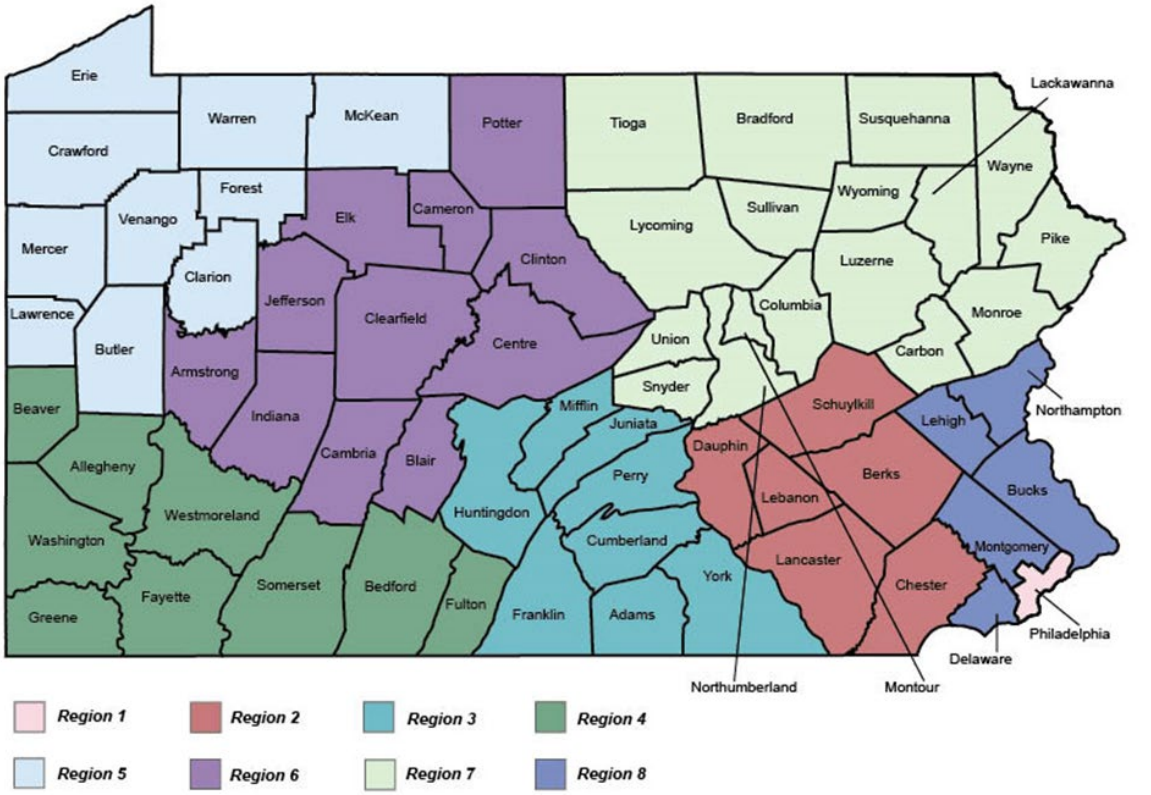
The main objectives of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

1. Reduce the disruption in the educational lives of children and youth experiencing homelessness;
2. Increase awareness about the nature and extent of the problems children and youth experiencing homelessness have enrolling in and gaining access to educational programs and services;
3. Explain laws and policies already in place that help students overcome these barriers to education;
4. Build on laws and policies already in place that help students overcome these barriers to education;
5. Build the capacity of others to assist in identifying, enrolling, and ensuring the educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness; and
6. Provide opportunities to collaborate with other statewide initiatives to improve academic achievement of students experiencing homelessness.

The regional coordinators' primary role is to make sure the McKinney-Vento Act is being followed in every Pennsylvania public school. Coordinators educate, troubleshoot, intervene, support, and collaborate with LEAs, shelters, agencies, and organizations to eliminate and/or reduce educational barriers and ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness receive a free and appropriate public education. Coordinators also prepare LEAs for monitoring and conduct monitoring follow-up as needed to support compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The following map illustrates Pennsylvania's eight ECYEH regions.

Figure 1. ECYEH Program Regional Map



EVALUATION DESIGN AND ACTIVITIES

PDE's Bureau of School Support contracts with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) to conduct a comprehensive external evaluation of the ECYEH Program to fulfill the federal evaluation requirement. This requirement is laid out in subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) amended to read as follows: SEC. 724. SECRETERIAL REPSONSIBILITES. (d) EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION - The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students and may use funds appropriated under section 726 to conduct such activities.

The 2022-23 program evaluation was the 13th year of program evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program is to:

1. Examine the extent to which regions are providing support to LEAs to meet the goals and objectives of the program;
2. Examine the extent to which those students identified as experiencing homelessness receive services and support;
3. Identify the types of services and supports students received;
4. Examine the extent to which students identified as experiencing homelessness attend and succeed in school;
5. Build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and
6. Provide recommendations for overall program improvement.

In addition to program evaluation, evaluators work with PDE to prepare the portions of required annual federal reporting related to children and youth experiencing homelessness. Required federal reporting data elements were derived from the U.S. Department of Education *EDFacts* file formats and the Comprehensive State Performance Report. Evaluators also used the National Center for Homeless Education's quality standards and evaluation guidance to ensure adequate data was included in the evaluation. Evaluators then worked with PDE to ensure that all data elements needed for federal reporting and program evaluation were identified and the most appropriate sources of data were used. Some data were collected at the program level and other data were collected at the state level; whenever possible, existing data sources were used, such as the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), PA-MEP database (MIS2000)[1], and Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).[2] Evaluators also used publicly available data for Title I, poverty, and urbanicity. The use of existing data sources was intended to reduce the burden on LEAs and other organizations required to report on their homeless populations.

Data collection procedures at the program level rely on a web-based reporting system that promotes secure and accurate data collection through a reporting interface. Improvements to the data collection process reduced data management by ECYEH staff while providing ECYEH staff continuous access to monitor information reported by entities in their region.

[1] Migrant Education Program staff receive ongoing training related to ECYEH eligibility to support this process and collaboration. Migrant Education Program staff document, in the state migrant education database, criteria to determine those children and youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness. All children and youth eligible for migrant services during the ECYEH program year are incorporated into the homeless identification and verification process.

[2] PDE contracted with Allegheny Intermediate Unit to conduct the statewide evaluation. As such, the evaluation team completed the necessary confidentiality protocols for data collection at the state level.

Program level data was provided by the homeless liaison in LEAs where students were enrolled, prekindergarten program staff, representatives from shelters where children and youth resided, and regional or program staff. In some cases, ECYEH staff worked with shelters in their region to provide information at the county level instead of individual shelters reporting information.[3] Shelters and non-LEA prekindergarten programs receiving direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program are required to be included in McKinney-Vento Act reporting.

To adhere to confidentiality in reporting afforded to domestic violence shelters,[4] a separate data collection instrument and procedure was developed in partnership with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and used with children and youth residing in domestic violence shelters. Domestic violence shelters could also submit data by providing an extract from their system. Domestic violence shelters that receive direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program are required to be included in McKinney-Vento Act reporting.

The PAsecureID[5] was a key data element for all individuals enrolled in school. The PAsecureID was used to pull data from other existing sources and to match data across multiple sources. Ultimately, the ECYEH Program is responsible for verifying children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness. Given this responsibility, PDE, ECYEH Program staff, evaluators, and PIMS staff worked together after the first year of the evaluation to secure permission for the ECYEH evaluation data collection to serve as the official source for flagging students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania. To accomplish this, evaluators conduct an extensive cross-referencing and follow-up process using data collected through the ECYEH Program, PIMS, MIS2000, and HMIS. After the cross-referencing and follow-up process is complete, evaluators compile a unique, comprehensive list of children and youth and their accompanying information. From this information, evaluators:

1. Prepare the homeless *EDFacts* files and information for the annual federal Comprehensive State Performance Report;
2. Provide the homeless flag for the PIMS system for all other PDE state and federal reporting for this population; and
3. Prepare the annual evaluation report.

In addition to data collected about identified children and youth, evaluators collect information on the work of the ECYEH Program staff via the web-based system. This includes details on the professional development and technical assistance ECYEH Program staff provide to LEAs, shelters, or other community organizations and agencies that address homelessness. Reporting also includes information regarding ECYEH Program staff participation in and contributions to homeless-related boards, consortia, or other meetings during which they educate on behalf of McKinney-Vento Act implementation in Pennsylvania.

[3] Shelters have their own reporting requirements and are required to report information in HUD‘s HMIS. In regions where data sharing agreements are in place, applicable data was extracted from the HMIS and provided to the coordinator or directly to evaluators depending on the agreement, thus eliminating duplicate reporting.
[4] Domestic violence shelters are exempt from reporting in HMIS due to program confidentiality.
[5] PAsecureID is a unique, permanent, anonymous statewide student identification number assigned to all students upon their first entry into Pennsylvania’s public school system.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

PDE received one-time federal funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 to address the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. These funds must be used by January 30, 2025, to identify homeless children and youth, provide wraparound services, and provide direct assistance to homeless children and youth so they can attend school and participate fully in school activities. These funds can also support in-person instruction during the school year as well as summer enrichment and extended learning programs. Overall, these funds hope to increase identification, enrollment, retention, and academic success of students experiencing homelessness.

ARP-HCY funds were divided into I and II. ARP-HCY I funds were disseminated early in the 2021-22 program year and continue to be allocated as three streams of funding to the following entities:

1. Regional offices to expand their existing work funded by ECYEH dollars with an emphasis on ARP-HCY goals.
2. The CSC to enhance professional development to regions and LEAs. Part of this funding stream was also used to develop a statewide mobile app for families and youth experiencing homelessness and for a virtual summer camp. CSC activities are highlighted in the Statewide Technical Assistance section of this report.
3. The AIU state evaluation team to evaluate ARP-HCY activities.
    a. In 2021-22, evaluators created an LEA Data Profile for each LEA that summarized their specific evaluation and federal reporting data, a process that was replicated for the 2022-23 program year. Profiles were designed to support the ARP-HCY goal of helping LEAs utilize data to assess needs and provide services to their students experiencing homelessness and were also used as part of the monitoring process. To further support this effort, evaluators created a “Questioning the Data” Guide to help LEAs understand their data and conducted a training session about the Profile at the annual state conference. The training was recorded and posted online as a resource for LEAs.
    b. At the end of the program year, an implementation survey was administered to gather data about the use of ARP-HCYII funds at the LEA and regional consortium levels. The findings from this annual survey are provided in this report.

ARP-HCY II funds were allocated directly to LEAs or to consortiums of LEAs at each regional level. These funds were disseminated late in the 2021-22 program year. ARP-HCY II funding was allocated based on historical ECYEH counts, adjusting for a minimum level of available funding for all McKinney-Vento (MV) subgrantees. Award amounts were further adjusted based on the number of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) opting to partake in the funding, be it through their own request (via a Request for Applicants) or that of a regional-level consortium.

How to Use This Report

This report highlights findings regarding the ECYEH Program based on available data from the 2022-23 program year.

The state evaluation of the ECYEH Program for 2022-23 examined information about children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness, the services these children and youth received, and the work of the ECYEH Program staff. The Executive Summary provides a condensed representation of the findings explained throughout this report. Prior year evaluation reports are available on PDE's website: www.education.pa.gov/homeless.

The targeted audiences for this report are the program management at PDE, the state technical assistance providers, and ECYEH Program regional staff. The results can also be useful for other groups. The findings and results provided within this report should be used to guide program management and to assist the state program team in providing technical assistance and support to regional staff to improve implementation, outcomes, and results.

Findings presented in this report are provided for the state and delineated by region. This report summarizes implementation, outcomes, and impacts of the ECYEH Program and addresses statewide and regional issues. Detailed information is aggregated at the county, LEA, or school level, when appropriate and is provided to the regional coordinators and PDE program staff to assist with needs assessment, internal program implementation, program improvement, and decision making.

Throughout this report percentages may be rounded and as such, may not total 100 percent. Furthermore, evaluators have eliminated any instances of zero in tables (shown as a dash) or "0%" in graphs where the result represents no instances. In cases where zero percent is included in a graph, it means less than 1 percent.

This report should be used to highlight successful implementation, outcomes, and programs as models. Care should be taken to avoid making comparisons across regions, as each region has differing numbers of LEAs, numbers of collaborating entities, reporting practices, ECYEH Program staff, and total child and youth counts. Additionally, regions have differing areas of focus based on regional need within the population experiencing homelessness. That said, differences among the regions can guide program improvement and technical assistance at the state level.

Disclaimer: The ECYEH Program is authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), as amended. This document and all its components were developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), Office of Safety and Healthy Students. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred. You are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, alteration, or copying of this document or its components is strictly prohibited without prior approval from PDE, specifically Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program, Division of Student Services.

Executive Summary

The PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program exists to ensure that each child and youth experiencing homelessness has equal access to the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. As such, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) created a state plan that outlines Pennsylvania's implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and issued a Basic Education Circular to offer guidance to local educational agencies (LEAs) regarding implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. The current state plan and Basic Education Circular, as well as other basic education circulars related to homelessness, are available on PDE's website: www.education.pa.gov/homeless.

The ECYEH Program is implemented in eight regions, each with a regional coordinator and staff who provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to LEAs and connect children, youth, families, and LEAs to additional services and resources for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Center for Schools and Communities (CSC), a subsidiary of the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, provides statewide technical assistance to regions and LEAs. The CSC monitors the regions to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and maintains a resource website: https://homeless.center-school.org/resources/. The PDE state coordinator is responsible for program coordination and collaboration at the state level and manages dispute resolutions among LEAs should they occur. Additionally, the state office, through the CSC, contracts with external monitors who monitor LEA implementation and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

This report summarizes evaluation findings for the ECYEH program. The purpose of the evaluation is to:

1. Examine the extent to which regions provide support to LEAs to meet the goals and objectives of the ECYEH Program;
2. Examine the extent to which children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness receive services and support;
3. Identify the types of services and supports children and youth received;
4. Examine the extent to which students identified as experiencing homelessness attend and succeed in school;
5. Build capacity within each region to examine results and make improvements based on data; and
6. Provide recommendations for overall program improvement.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

This report presents findings on the extent to which the ECYEH Program offered outreach, professional development, technical assistance, and support to LEAs or other entities that serve the homeless population or on behalf of the families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness.

Approximately 12,680 individuals[6] from 942 unique entities participated in ECYEH-provided trainings, professional development, or workshops in 2022-23.; LEAs and liaisons were the most represented entity and participant type. This is not surprising as LEAs are the largest entity group and are the first priority of the ECYEH Program, with LEA liaisons being directly involved with this population.

While ECYEH offers professional development or training to various entities, technical assistance is most often "request-based help" initiated by the LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, agencies and organizations, or other groups. Of the 868 entities[7] receiving technical assistance:

1. 63 percent (545) were LEAs; 9 percent (76) were shelters; 24 percent (212) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and 4 percent (35) were prekindergarten programs; and
2. 80 percent (692) received child-specific technical assistance; 85 percent (738) received non-child specific technical assistance; 88 percent (761) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials; and 70 percent (608) received bulk supplies, such as bus passes, backpacks, school supplies, clothing, or hygiene items.

ECYEH staff members also collaborated with other agencies, organizations, or groups as part of committees, boards, meetings, or consortia at the county- or regional levels to address homelessness. Collaborators included children and youth agencies, shelters, housing-related organizations or groups, prekindergarten programs, runaway and trafficking prevention groups, mental health agencies, social workers, drug and alcohol agencies, and food pantries. In 2022-23, ECYEH staff participated in 508 unique events. These events occurred annually (63 events), monthly (231 events), quarterly (132 events), or bi-monthly (80 events). Typically, ECYEH staff members attended events as regular attendees; however, in 104 instances, staff held a leader/facilitator role in the event.

PROGRAM OUTCOME FINDINGS

As outlined in program objectives, the primary focus of ECYEH program implementation is to conduct outreach and to foster increased awareness of the McKinney-Vento Act and the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The program's success in meeting these objectives is reflected in the number of entities represented in reporting and also the number of children and youth who were identified, served, and reported. Program outcomes include child and youth characteristics for those served by the ECYEH Program and details describing the reporting entities.

[6] This number may be duplicated as some individuals may have participated in more than one event / activity. Some regions were not able to provide event participation counts, so a unique count is not available.

[7] Individual entities may be counted in more than one technical assistance category.

Per federal reporting requirements, all public LEAs are required to report on students attending their schools who experience homelessness. LEAs are also required to report younger siblings of enrolled students. Additionally, all entities that receive training, professional development, technical assistance, or resources from the ECYEH Program are required to report on children and youth experiencing homelessness who reside in their facility or attend their prekindergarten programs.

Public LEAs include school districts, charter schools, intermediate unit-operated prekindergarten programs,[8] and full-time (comprehensive) career and technical centers.[9] In the 2022-23 academic year, there were 499 school districts,[10] 176 charter and cyber charter schools, and 10 comprehensive career and technical centers.

Based on the unique, comprehensive list of homeless students identified in Pennsylvania, nearly all LEAs were represented. There were 9 school districts and 15 charter or cyber charter schools for which no students meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness were reported. Of these 24 LEAs, three school districts and one charter or cyber charter school indicated that they had no McKinney-Vento Act-eligible students to report. LEAs were notified of their reporting responsibilities routinely, and the regional coordinators frequently followed up with non-reporting LEAs to reinforce these obligations. Shelter data was also collected for all counties.

As a result of outreach and ongoing collaboration work, 46,714 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2022-23. This is an increase from 40,003 and 32,666 identified children and youth in 2021-22 and 2020-21, respectively, and historically is the highest reported attributed count. An increased focus on identification and enrollment beginning in 2021-22 because of ARP-HCY I funds may be contributing to the increase in identified children and youth.

The number of students enrolled in school that were identified as experiencing homelessness also increased from 34,043 in 2021-22 to 40,122 in 2022-23. Students experiencing homelessness comprised 2.4 percent of the total Pennsylvania public school population during the 2022-23 school year. This was an increase from the prior year's 2.0 percent. For comparison, the rate was 1.6 percent in 2020-21. The 2022-23 national percentage of the enrolled population experiencing homelessness was 2.75 percent.[11]

Of the 40,122 children and youth enrolled in LEA prekindergarten through grade 12, 69 percent were doubled-up;[12] 19 percent were in shelters or transitional housing; 10 percent were in

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[8] Not all intermediate units offer all prekindergarten programs (Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts). Additionally, Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver IU2 and Philadelphia IU26 are incorporated into Pittsburgh and Philadelphia school districts, respectively. Students in kindergarten through grade 12 who attend intermediate unit schools or classrooms for instruction are attributed and reported by their home district, even if the student receives instruction in another school in the district or in another school district.
[9] Students who attend part-time career and technical centers are attributed to their home school for data and reporting purposes. Students who attend full-time career and technical centers are attributed to the career and technical center.
[10] Pennsylvania has 500 school districts; however, one very small district in suburban Philadelphia enrolls no students: Bryn Athyn School District, http://www.brynathynschooldistrict.org/.
[11] National Center for Homeless Education - National Overview: https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/ConsolidatedStateProfile.aspx
[12] Doubled-up is defined as children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

hotels or motels; and 2 percent were unsheltered. Nighttime status was not required for the birth to age 2 population or for children ages three to five and not enrolled in an LEA-operated prekindergarten program.

Of the 46,714 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness:

- 17 percent were also identified as unaccompanied youth,[13]
- 75 percent were classified as economically disadvantaged, though it is likely that many of those with unknown[14] status (22 percent) may have been economically disadvantaged as well,
- 32 percent were Black or African American; 30 percent were White; 24 percent were Hispanic/Latino (any race); and 8 percent were classified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races. Race could not be determined for 5 percent,
- 13 percent were identified as English learners,
- 3 percent were identified as migrant per Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program,
- 26 percent were identified as having a disability, with 35 percent of those identified categorized as having a "specific learning disability," and 94 non-LEA entities reported 7,985 (17 percent) children and youth, 4,813 of which were birth to age 2, ages 3 to 5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten) or attending non-LEA prekindergarten programs.

Of the 40,122 enrolled students experiencing homelessness, 69 percent attended LEAs categorized as city or suburb and 77 percent attended high-poverty LEAs (i.e., LEAs that enroll 40 percent or more of students classified as low income). This information was unknown for the 8 percent of the enrolled population only identified by shelters that did not provide LEA information.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

Program impacts include findings that document the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the ECYEH Program occur, including reducing or eliminating enrollment or education barriers, enrolled students' remaining in their school of origin, and students receiving services aligned with the authorized activities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. Student academic outcomes are also included.

Barriers are defined as situations that interfere with a child or youth's school enrollment, attendance, or educational success. Overall, 24 percent of enrolled students had one or more barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. The most common barrier was determining if a student was eligible for homeless services, followed by transportation. Transportation barriers arise due to LEA financial constraints and/or logistical challenges in arranging transportation. As such, transportation was a focal point for ARP-HCY II funding in 2022-23 to alleviate issues through the end of the funding period in 2024-25. Additionally, funds are being used to target potential long-term solutions to address logistical challenges that currently exist with transportation.

[13] An unaccompanied youth is any person age 21 or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

[14] Children and youth with 'unknown' status include children in the birth to age 2 category, ages 3 to 5 and not enrolled in prekindergarten, those residing in shelters, and migrant children for whom this information was unavailable.

One of the rights guaranteed to enrolled students by the McKinney-Vento Act is to remain in their school of origin if it is determined to be in their best interest. Of the 40,122 enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness, LEA/school mobility[15] could be determined for 92 percent, of which 79 percent remained in their LEA/school combination during the program year. Nearly three percent had more than two LEA/school combinations.

Students experiencing homelessness also have the right to support services that promote academic success. Overall, 89 percent of the 46,714 identified children and youth received services at the individual level. Tutoring or other instructional support was the most prevalent service received (54 percent).

State academic assessment data for 2022-23 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. State assessment data were available for approximately 76 percent of students experiencing homelessness in grades where the assessments are given. Overall, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness taking the state assessments is lower than the state's designated criteria of 95 percent. Of students that took the exams, 25 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level in reading/literature, 13 percent scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I, and 31 percent scored proficient or advanced in science/biology.

School attendance data was available for 87 percent of enrolled students, of which 46 percent of students attended 90 percent or more of the days enrolled. This represents a chronically absent rate of 54 percent, which is an improvement compared to the rate of 58 percent in 2021-22.

Of the 18,430 students enrolled in grades 7-12, 3.9 percent dropped out of school (3.8 percent in 2021-22), with grade 12 having the highest dropout percentage at 7.1 percent, followed by grade 11 at 6.6 percent, and grades 9 and 10, each at 4.0 percent.

Of 2,995 grade 12 students for whom graduation status was known, 74.9 percent graduated, compared to 72.7% in 2021-22. Additionally, 68 grade 11 students (2.8 percent) graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

REFLECTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Reporting accuracy and consistency increases each year. Furthermore, reporting by new entities, notably Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) and prekindergarten programs, offers the ECYEH Program a more complete understanding of homelessness. As reporting has improved, the following themes have emerged:

1. Regional staff provide a wealth of training, technical assistance, and coordination of services to LEAs and entities that serve children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.
2. Most children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness (89 percent for 2022-23) receive individual support or services.
3. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are predominately economically disadvantaged and attend LEAs that have high levels of poverty.

[15] LEA/school mobility measures the movement of an enrolled child or youth among multiple LEAs or between school buildings within an LEA during the program year.

4. Statewide, transportation remains one of the most common barriers.
5. Most students remain in their LEA/school of origin.
6. Despite some consistency for a large portion of children and youth, there are students who experience extreme mobility or experience barriers to enrollment.
7. Homeless counts vary considerably across state regions.
8. Although ECYEH Program is focusing more on the under-five population, prekindergarten identification protocols and McKinney-Vento Act reporting guidance do not align.
9. Regional staff have expanded their responsibilities to meet the needs of an increasing number of children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness and an increasing list of collaborating entities.
10. Only 24 LEAs (historical low) reported zero identified children and youth experiencing homelessness. Many of these LEAs were small, served a subset of the total K-12 population, enrolled few students from low-income families, or had a combination of these conditions. Since 2016-17 the total number of LEAs with no students identified decreased by over half (69 to 24).
11. Slightly more than half (54 percent) of students experiencing homelessness exhibit chronic absenteeism, an improvement over the 58 percent in 2021-22. Chronic absenteeism most likely directly contributes to lower outcomes on Pennsylvania academic assessments, on-time graduation, and high dropout rates, especially in grades 10-12. Identifying and addressing chronic absenteeism needs to be a priority for the state office as well as the individual LEAs.
12. Overall, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness taking the state assessments is lower than the state's designated criteria of 95 percent. Further, students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania typically score far below their peers and about 10 percentage points lower than the historically underperforming population in all grades and content areas.

Based on data results, the following points are recommended to optimize program implementation at the regional and local levels:

1. Regional staff continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by, or with, other entities that work with or support homelessness to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program.
2. State and regional ECYEH staff continue to explore creative transportation options to support LEAs with common barriers.
3. Regional staff continue to work with local Continuum of Care contemporaries to ensure that HMIS reporting continues for all 57 counties.
4. Regional staff continue to explore options for instructional support to students outside of the standard LEA instructional period, including but not limited to, afterschool/summer programs or students residing in shelters.
5. Regional staff consider professional development or technical assistance to LEAs related to examining prekindergarten programming options for younger siblings of enrolled students; students' school attendance, dropout, and graduation rates; and participation in academic support activities. LEAs with excessive missing data, high chronic absenteeism, low graduation rates, high dropout rates, or poor assessment outcomes for their students experiencing homelessness would be of primary focus.
6. Continue to build collaborations with prekindergarten partners at the state and regional levels and ensure that all LEAs know the prekindergarten programs in their area and have the capacity to make referrals when they enroll students who have under-five

siblings not enrolled in prekindergarten programs. Connections between shelters and prekindergarten programs may need to be established or strengthened.

7. Regional staff continue to reach out to non-reporting LEAs, with a bigger emphasis on charter schools, to ensure that they understand their McKinney-Vento Act obligations, understand how their reporting contributes to the ECYEH ecosystem, and have protocols in place to identify and report eligible children and youth experiencing homelessness.
8. Regional Staff continue to emphasize the importance of ensuring that students experiencing homelessness participate in state standardized testing and connect students to services and support that can help them better prepare for standardized tests.
9. Due to the increase in reporting of children and youth experiencing homelessness, additional outreach to non-LEA entities, and LEA monitoring preparation and follow-up, a review of ECYEH staff duties may be warranted to ensure the most time-effective delivery methods for training, technical assistance, and outreach.
10. State staff examine prekindergarten identification protocols to see if there is a way to align them with McKinney-Vento Act reporting guidance.
11. Regional and LEA staff continue to use the LEA Data Profile to evaluate trends to inform how they identify and serve children and youth experiencing homelessness.
12. Continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by or with other entities that work on or support homeless populations to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program. Utilize state technical assistance to monitor and assure that regions are accurately reporting the services they provide.

Findings

Findings are grouped into three sections: program implementation, program outcomes, and program impacts, including student outcomes. As described in the Evaluation Design and Activities section of this report, data was compiled from several sources to provide an assessment of child and youth homelessness in Pennsylvania as it relates to the McKinney-Vento Act. In all cases, children and youth identified by more than one type of entity or a non-LEA entity were reported with their LEA(s) whenever LEA information is provided.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Program implementation findings reveal the extent to which the ECYEH Program offered professional development, technical assistance, or support to LEAs, other entities that serve the homeless population, or families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness. Information on trainings and workshops, technical assistance and bulk supplies, and meetings, consortia, and board participation were collected at the regional level via a web-based data collection system. The process by which this information is collected has been refined each year to better capture services provided by the ECYEH staff.

Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Collaboration

ECYEH program staff provided professional development and technical assistance to LEAs, parents and caregivers, shelters, and organizations serving the homeless population.

A longstanding priority for the ECYEH program is outreach to LEAs and shelters to increase awareness of the McKinney-Vento Act and to align service delivery for students experiencing homelessness. In recent years, regional coordinators have increased their outreach to non-LEA prekindergarten programs and agencies and organizations that work directly with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Each year, evaluators work with regional coordinators to improve data collection to improve the consistency of reporting across regions. To help with this process, a web-based reporting system was implemented in the 2016-17 program year. Though efforts in consistency are improving, how regions classify and report their professional development still varies by region. Likewise, the varying size and urbanicity of the regions contribute to the ways in which professional development is conducted. As such, differences in professional development reporting may be a result of the characteristics of the region. The intent of this section is to highlight the scope and depth of the McKinney-Vento Act outreach provided across the state.

In 2022-23, regional offices used their ARP-HCY I funding to support and expand professional development and technical assistance ECYEH funded activities highlighted below.

Recipients of ECYEH Services

Evaluators examined ECYEH-offered trainings, professional development, and workshops. Professional development included liaison training, McKinney-Vento 101, ECYEH 101, and McKinney-Vento special topics, which included transportation or training geared to specific audiences such as special education directors or various educational or community groups.

Preparing LEAs for external monitoring or conducting monitoring follow-up was also reported in special topics under professional development.

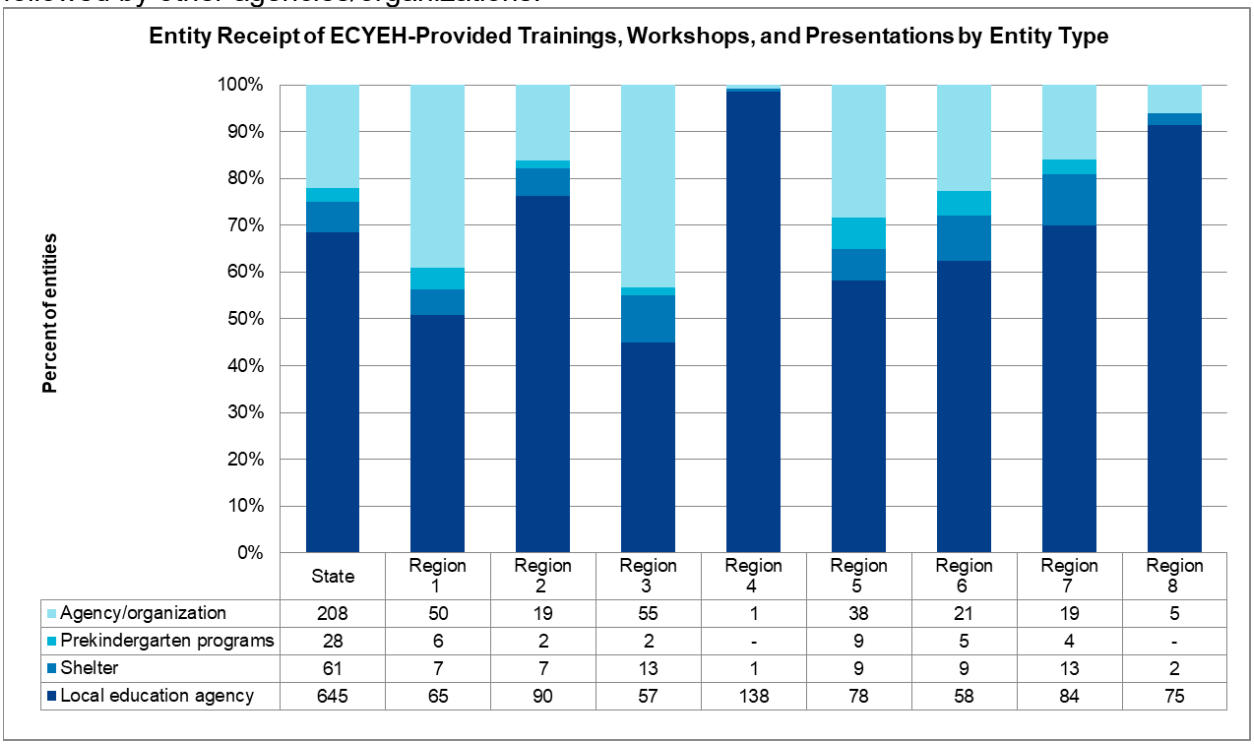
Professional development was provided at the regional, county, LEA, entity, or individual level. Likewise, the same event could have occurred at multiple levels. Liaison training was also provided throughout the year as staff turnover occurred. To mediate the variations in the number of events offered, professional development was examined by who received the professional development.

Figure 2 shows attendance by entity type: LEAs (including LEAs with prekindergarten programs); non-LEA prekindergarten programs or services; shelters, emergency, or transitional housing; and agencies, organizations, or groups.

During the 2022-23 program year, 942 unique entities participated in one or more ECYEH-provided trainings, professional development sessions, or workshops (see Figure 2).

Overall, LEAs were the most represented group, and their liaisons were the largest of the defined participant types. This is not surprising as LEAs are the largest entity group and are the priority of the ECYEH Program.

Figure 2. LEAs were the most common participant in ECYEH trainings/workshops/presentation, followed by other agencies/organizations.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Agency/organization	208	50	19	55	1	38	21	19	5
Prekindergarten programs	28	6	2	2	-	9	5	4	-
Shelter	61	7	7	13	1	9	9	13	2
Local education agency	645	65	90	57	138	78	58	84	75

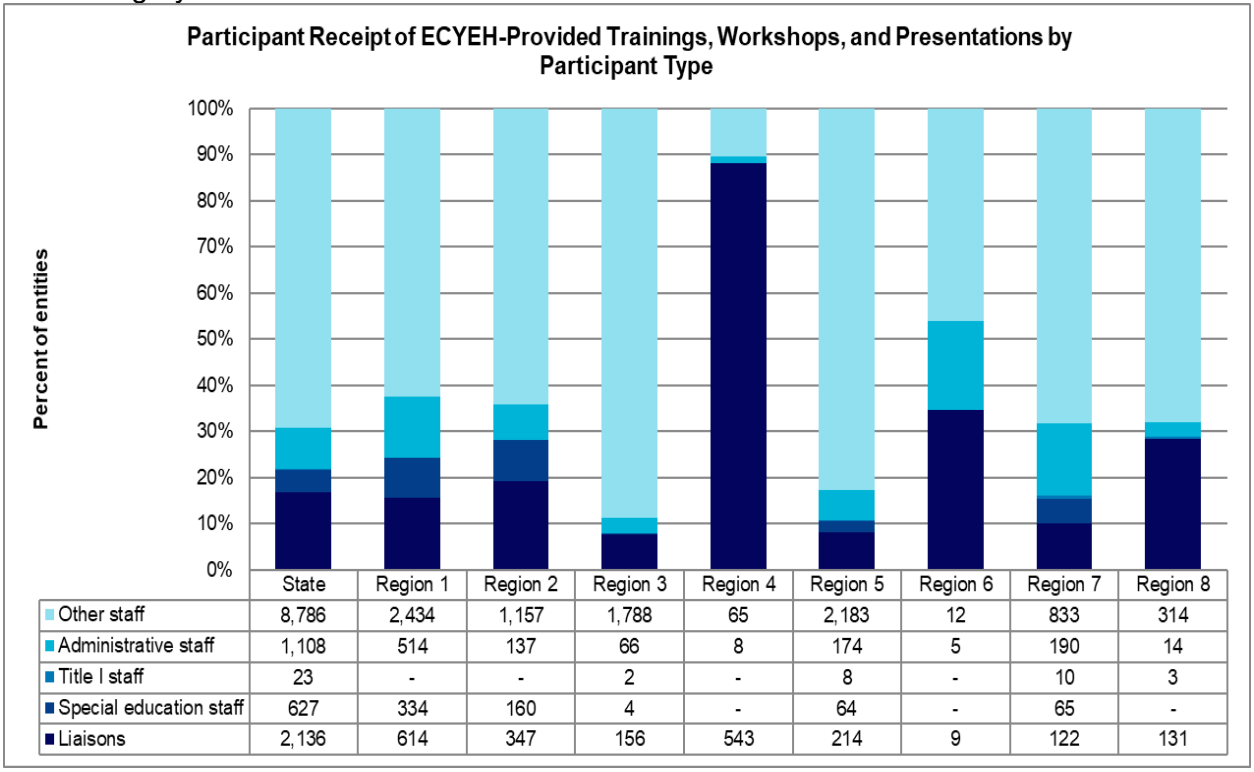
Professional development was also tracked by participant role. Overall, 12,680[16] individuals representing various roles participated in ECYEH trainings or events (see Figure 3).

[16] This number may include duplicates as participants may have attended more than one event.

Participants were asked to select their primary role. The majority of participants chose the “other staff” category which includes teachers, counselors, support staff, and other school personnel.

Also of note, some LEAs, especially those with large numbers of students experiencing homelessness, have a designated liaison in each of their buildings. Building-level liaisons work in collaboration with the required LEA-wide liaison. As such, liaison counts may be duplicated for this reason. Regional coordinators and their staff typically hold at least two trainings specifically for LEA liaisons. They also supported LEAs that were scheduled to be monitored. In 2022-23, 2,136 liaisons (duplicate count) were reported as attending one or more trainings held by ECYEH staff, and 76 liaisons were reported as participating in a session that focused on LEA monitoring preparation and/or follow-up.

Figure 3. Other than Region 4, the majority of ECYEH training participants fell into the “other staff” category.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Other staff	8,786	2,434	1,157	1,788	65	2,183	12	833	314
Administrative staff	1,108	514	137	66	8	174	5	190	14
Title I staff	23	-	-	2	-	8	-	10	3
Special education staff	627	334	160	4	-	64	-	65	-
Liaisons	2,136	614	347	156	543	214	9	122	131

While ECYEH provides professional development or training to various entities, technical assistance is most often request-based help initiated by LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, agencies and organizations, or other groups. Technical assistance categories included child/family-specific, child/family non-specific, McKinney-Vento Act-related materials, or supplies. Child/family-specific and child/family non-specific technical assistance typically occurred through phone calls or emails. If applicable, child/family-specific technical assistance that resulted in services provided to an individual child/youth or family was documented in service delivery for that child/youth.

Some entities received all four kinds of technical assistance over the course of the program year. As such, an individual entity may be counted in more than one of the technical assistance categories. Regions reported a total of 868 unique LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, and groups, agencies, or organizations as receiving support through one or more of the

technical assistance categories. Of these 868 entities, 63 percent (545) were LEAs; 9 percent (76) were shelters; 24 percent (212) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and four percent (35) were non-LEA prekindergarten programs.

Of the 545 LEAs that received technical assistance:

- 434 LEAs (80 percent) received child-specific technical assistance. Technical assistance frequency was captured as once, occasionally, or often. Of these LEAs, 319 reported receiving this type of technical assistance 'often,' 96 as 'occasionally,' and 19 as 'once.'
- 437 LEAs (80 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 320 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'often,' 98 received 'occasionally,' and 19 received 'once.'
- 458 LEAs (84 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 320 LEAs (59 percent) received bulk supplies such backpacks, school supplies, bus passes, clothing, toiletries, or blankets.

Of the 76 shelter, emergency, or transitional housing facilities that received technical assistance:

- 66 facilities (87 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 36 received 'often' and 30 received 'occasionally.'
- 67 facilities (88 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 56 received 'often' and 11 facilities received 'occasionally.'
- 67 facilities (88 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act related materials.
- 65 facilities (86 percent) received bulk supplies.

Of the 212 agencies, organizations, or groups that received technical assistance:

- 160 entities (75 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 41 received 'often,' and 119 received 'occasionally.'
- 200 entities (94 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 136 received 'often' and 64 entities received 'occasionally.'
- 202 entities (95 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 190 entities (90 percent) received bulk supplies.

Of the 35 non-LEA prekindergarten programs that received technical assistance support:

- 32 entities (91 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 15 received 'often,' and 17 received 'occasionally.'
- 34 entities (97 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 33 received 'often,' and one received 'occasionally.'
- 34 entities (97 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 33 entities (94 percent) received bulk supplies.

Meetings, Boards, Consortia and Committees

In addition to facilitating professional development and providing technical assistance, ECYEH staff members spend a portion of their time collaborating with other agencies, organizations, or groups by participating in meetings, boards, consortia, or committees. The number of entities that work with children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness varies greatly among the regions, though there are some commonalities.

In 2022-23, ECYEH staff reported participating in 508 unique events. These events occurred annually (63 events), monthly (231 events), quarterly (132 events), or bi-monthly (80 events).

Typically, ECYEH staff members attended events as regular attendees; however, in 104 instances, staff held a leader/facilitator role in the event. Event attendees ranged from two to 11,989 people, with 1,809 people being the average number of people at an event.

Generally, events were county or regional-level meetings with other entities that work with homelessness, such as children and youth agencies, shelters, housing-related organizations or groups, prekindergarten programs, runaway and trafficking prevention groups, mental health agencies, social workers, drug and alcohol agencies, or food pantries.

ECYEH Program outreach through training, technical assistance, or collaboration not only spread the word about the McKinney-Vento Act and the ECYEH Program, but also assisted in the identification of children/youth and families. Increasing counts of children and youth experiencing homelessness are a direct result of ECYEH staff outreach and collaboration. Likewise, the focused preparation of and follow-up with LEAs regarding monitoring also increased identification and reporting of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

State Technical Assistance

The Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) provided the following professional services for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to support training, technical assistance (TA), monitoring, resource, and project development for the 2022-23 program year.

ECYEH Program Regional Office Technical Assistance Visits

Program staff conducted sixteen individual regional TA visits for PA's eight regional ECYEH Program offices. One visit per regional ECYEH Program office during the fall 2022 and in spring 2023 was conducted to provide technical support and guidance to each regional coordinator and regional staff members. TA visits were conducted virtually and in-person in 2022-23. The PDE ECYEH State Coordinator also monitored each ECYEH Program region to ensure programmatic and contract compliance in accordance with federal and state guidelines for both ECYEH programming and with ARP-HCY I and II deliverables. Findings from TA visits and regional monitoring contributed to statewide best practices, recommendations, and identification of content, topics, and experts in the field for the annual statewide conference (Paving the Way to Educational Success or PTW) alongside other professional development and training opportunities. A report for each TA visit was generated and shared with PDE and the ECYEH Program regional office for continuous program improvement.

ECYEH Program Statewide and Regional Professional Development

Statewide ECYEH Program staff coordinated and facilitated numerous state-level professional development activities. These professional development activities supported regional coordinators, homeless liaisons, and other providers that work with children, youth and families experiencing homelessness. Professional development activities for the 2022-23 program year included:

1. Participation, co-development, support, and dissemination of the following resources, webinars, and trainings:
    a. Provided support at several ECYEH Program regional office trainings including:
        - Virtual Region 8 Head Start/Early Learning Resource Center roundtable with guest speaker Tracy Duarte, Pennsylvania (PA) Head Start.

- Virtual Region 4 Early Childhood Identification with Tracy Duarte, PA Head Start.
- In-person Region 3 “Stronger Together” day-long summit featuring homeless liaisons and CoC (Continuum of Care) cross-training and collaboration.
- In person Region 5 homeless liaison spring regional training
- Co-presented “McKinney-Vento 101” training with region 2 staff for the Migrant Education Program statewide meeting.
- Hosted information session with Department of Human Services special needs unit.

b. Participated in the following conferences: Exhibitor at PA Student Assistance Professional (PA SAP) Conference in February 2023 and attendee at Point Source Youth National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness in June 2023.
c. Disseminated the following resources: “Opportunities for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness in Pennsylvania: A Summary Report,” “Homelessness in the Early Years,” “Mental Health Infographic,” and Juneteenth resources related to children and youth experiencing homelessness.
d. Attended or participated in the follow webinars: “Using Data to Advocate for Infants & Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness in Pennsylvania,” “Supporting the Health of Children Experiencing Homelessness,” and “Learn About Pennsylvania's New Policy, which Helps Youth with Experience in Foster Care, the Juvenile Justice System, and Homelessness Access their Birth Certificates.”
e. Fielded general TA requests from regional offices on unique scenarios, identification, allowable activities, and uses of funds.
f. Gathered input and sought collaboration from regional offices for developing monitor recommendations and tip sheet for the 2022-23 ECYEH Program monitoring cycle.
g. Participated monthly with PA Early Childhood Education Homelessness quarterly stakeholders’ meetings organized by PA Head Start.
h. Connected PA’s Parents as Teachers Program staff with ECYEH Program regional offices for student and family engagement support.
i. Participated in monthly meetings with PDE and Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3.
j. Provided daily or weekly approvals to the ECYEH Homeless Liaison Directory available online.

2. Coordination and implementation of a September 2022 hybrid event featuring Refugee Education (RE) Summit and Paving the Way to Educational Success Conference (PTW). The conference was attended by 700 professionals working with children and youth experiencing homelessness, in foster care, and/or educators and community staff who work with refugee students and families. This was the first year PTW was held in collaboration with a specialized event. Both events offered a variety of attendance options for participants. Attendees could choose between any combination of the following:
   - RE Summit (in-person only)
   - PTW, virtual attendance
   - PTW, in-person attendance

   The 2022 summit and conference included five general sessions/keynotes for attendees, along with a variety of concurrent sessions with over ninety-nine presenters

covering information across 50 content-based sessions. Opportunities to grow professional learning for attendees included themes on:

- Accelerating Learning
- Cross-System Collaboration
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Identification, Outreach, and Engagement
- Student Well-Being

Other 2022 summit and conference highlights included:

- Advocate awards ceremony honoring ten “Advocates of the Year” who have positively impacted the educational success of students experiencing homelessness or in foster care.
- “Meet the Exhibitors” session featuring nineteen organizations and daily “exhibit exploration” sessions.
- Opening and closing conference reflective spaces/activities.
- Regional and local education agency networking spaces.

3. Launched ECYEH Awareness Week Campaign in November 2022 including:
    a. Facilitated development of an online community outreach and social media campaign toolkit for regional offices, LEAs, shelters, community organizations, and student advocates to simplify and unify awareness efforts.
    b. Provided coordination for a statewide “Wear Red Day,” for various awareness events, and for supply drives associated with awareness week at schools and community organizations to increase identification and awareness.
    c. Coordinated sharing student stories to uplift and elevate student's experiences with homelessness; and
    d. Supported the “ECYEH Awareness Advocacy Day” special event at the state capital to grow statewide support and elevate the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

4. Coordination and facilitation of spring regional professional development and meeting held in May 2023. Professional development training for ECYEH Program regional offices included:
    a. *Unaccompanied Youth - Train the Trainer* with NAEHCY (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth).
    b. *Interpersonal Leadership* with Work Wisdom LLC.

5. Coordination and facilitation of ECYEH and ARP-HCY monitoring for the 2022-23 cycle year including:
    a. Compilation of LEAs to be monitored, reviews and edits to monitoring tool in collaboration with the AIU;
    b. Contracting with monitors;
    c. Hosting virtual monitor orientation training;
    d. Scheduling monitor visits; and
    e. Providing additional monitor and LEA support throughout the monitoring cycle along with processing of all finalized reports throughout the 2022-23 school year.

6. ECYEH statewide website content development and design refresh began with review and updates for “Educators & Liaisons,” “Parents and Students,” and “Shelters” for new

ECYEH website pages (tabs). The development of the new design was ongoing throughout the 2022-23 program year.

ARP-HCY Funded Statewide TA, Training, and Professional Development

During the 2022-23 program year, ARP-HCY statewide technical assistance and training highlights included:

1. Provided extensive support to LEAs receiving ARP-HCY funding including holding and archiving orientation sessions for ARP-HCY I and II Fund grantees.
2. Maintained ARP-HCY webpages and disseminated publications and resource materials to LEA grantees, shelters, and other community organizations. Visit our ARP-HCY webpage for more information.
3. Provided monthly virtual Restorative Practice Series for youth, families, and educators with instructor Dr. Rajni Shankar-Brown, Stetson University. The series, titled "Replenish and Keep Growing!" included topics such as social emotional learning, managing screen time, cultivating empathy, and cultural humility. Average monthly attendance included 50-60 participants. Monthly sessions offered continuing education credits to attendees.
4. Developed and launched a mobile and desktop app, "Finding Your Way in PA," empowering educators, service providers, and those seeking help to find and access Pennsylvania resources based on service area by radius. Service categories include education, shelter/housing, food, and other resources. Held focus groups during app development. Learn more about the app online. Additionally, a community outreach toolkit was created to encourage outreach and awareness of the new PA tool.
5. Provided guidance, technical assistance, and made resources available to grantees on topics such as, allowable activities, utilization of funds, a program timeline and reporting requirements. Sent reminders to grantees about availability of funds and planning their fund balance. 1:1 technical assistance was provided as requested.
6. Provided a grantee webinar titled "Planning and Implementing Your ARP-HCY Fund Balance." The webinar recording and handout was made available online.
7. Provided training on the following at in-person events: "Preparing for Your ECYEH or ARP-HCY Monitoring" and "Using ARP-HCY Funds to Meet Student Needs."
8. Supported monitoring of ARP-HCY grantees, as part of LEA McKinney-Vento monitoring and PA ECYEH Program regional office monitoring.
9. Coordinated and hosted a virtual summer camp, "Build Your Best School Year," for students experiencing homelessness in summer 2023. The camp's objectives include topics to accelerate learning, to prepare students for the following school year, and to provide students with the opportunity to engage with peers in similar life situations. Over 50 students participated.
10. Exhibited at various education-related events and conferences throughout PA to raise awareness about students experiencing homelessness and available statewide resources and program availability of ARP-HCY.
11. Developed and created a monthly podcast series, "I Will Be Your Voice: Stories of Homelessness and Hope" to amplify the voices and stories of students experiencing homelessness via guest interviews. The podcast seeks to create a dialogue around students experiencing homelessness to increase awareness and identification. Learn more about our podcast online.
12. ARP-HCY Consortium support included:
    a. Coordinated a multi-phase distribution of hygiene and school supplies kits to homeless liaisons. Over 1,000 kits were delivered.

b. Organized and oversaw a day of learning for homeless serving educators in Philadelphia, specifically for those working at charter schools. This day included speakers from nationally recognized organizations and boasted registration over 100.
c. Implementation of a personal development social-emotional learning curriculum to be used freely and in perpetuity by consortium LEAs.
d. Holding ongoing technical assistance for the use of ARP-HCY II Consortium funds by member LEAs.

In 2022-23, consistent support, training, and technical assistance was provided to the ECYEH Program regional office and ARP-HCY Fund grantees. Regular email and phone contact is conducted for technical assistance support along with bi-monthly regional coordinator meetings (five annually) and bi-annual all regional staff meetings (held October and May) for ECYEH Program regional offices. Organized by the ECYEH and ARP-HCY program staff, these meetings give regional coordinators and their support staff the opportunity to hear state updates, network with each other, learn, discuss, brainstorm and problem solve complicated situations across various needs and current trends recognized across the state. Technical assistance is provided to ARP-HCY Fund grantees as requested. An ARP-HCY email account and contact information for ARP-HCY grantees is posted online.

ECYEH and ARP-HCY program staff also encouraged regional offices to submit to present workshop sessions at statewide and other national conferences and professional development opportunities. ECYEH program staff also attended the annual National Association for the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (NAEHCY) conference in-person in San Diego, CA in October 2022 for further professional development growth and to bring key materials back to the statewide program. All avenues of program implementation and professional development via ECYEH and ARP-HCY programming were designed to improve outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Finding Your Way in Pennsylvania App

The Finding Your Way in Pennsylvania (FYW in PA) app was developed and is supported through the American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Program. This app is a Pennsylvania based mobile and desktop app designed to share services, resources, and information with young people and families, particularly those experiencing homelessness. Users can search for and request assistance with services and resources in their current location, local communities, and throughout Pennsylvania to connect them with helpful support. Over 5,000 services for shelter, food, health and mental health, education, and work are listed within the app. Ultimately, it supports educational stability and strives to foster positive education outcomes so that students and families experiencing housing instability can succeed in school, work, and life.

Over 9,600 users engaged with the FYW in PA app during the 2022-23 ECYEH program year. Users were able to utilize their desktop (63.9 percent), mobile device (35.4 percent), or tablet (0.7 percent) to access the 5,123 total service providers available during 2022-23 in the app. Of these services, categories were defined as Women (3,538 providers), Men (3,497 providers), Seniors (3,867 providers), Kids (4,339 providers), Families (3,513 providers), LGBTQ+ (3,529 providers), Disabled (3,517 providers), and All (3,344 providers covering every category). Additionally, service types were defined as Resources (3,596 providers), Food (2,520 providers), Education (1,412 providers), Shelter (792 providers), and Health (423 providers).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program outcome findings reveal information about the children and youth identified and served through the ECYEH Program and information about the LEAs they attended. Children and youth information was collected through ECYEH Program data collection, PIMS, MIS2000, HMIS, individual shelter extracts, and non-LEA prekindergarten reports. LEA and school information comes from data made publicly available by PDE, the National Center for Education Statistics, and LEAs.

Conducting outreach to raise awareness of the McKinney-Vento Act and the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness is the primary focus of ECYEH program implementation. The program's success in meeting these objectives is reflected in the number of entities represented in reporting and the number of children and youth identified, served, and reported. Program outcomes include child and youth characteristics for those served by the ECYEH Program and details describing the reporting entities.

Per federal reporting requirements, all public LEAs are required to report on students attending their schools who experience homelessness. LEAs are also required to report younger siblings of enrolled students. Additionally, all entities that receive training, professional development, technical assistance, or resources from the ECYEH Program, including non-LEAs, are required to report on children and youth experiencing homelessness who reside in their facility or attend their prekindergarten programs.

Public LEAs include school districts, charter schools, intermediate unit-operated prekindergarten programs,[17] and full-time (comprehensive) career and technical centers.[18] In the 2022-23 academic year, there were 499 school districts,[19] 176 charter and cyber charter schools, and 10 comprehensive career and technical centers.

Based on the unique, comprehensive list of identified students from across Pennsylvania, nearly all LEAs were represented. There were 9 school districts and 15 charter or cyber charter schools for which no students meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness were reported. Of these 24 LEAs, three school districts and one charter or cyber charter schools indicated that they had no students to report. LEAs were notified of their reporting responsibilities routinely, and the regional coordinators frequently followed up with non-reporting LEAs to reinforce these obligations.

Further exploration of the LEAs with no identified students or reporting zero students[20] revealed that many of the LEAs were small (16 LEAs had fewer than 500 students), served a subset of

[17] Not all intermediate units offer all prekindergarten programs (Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts). Additionally, Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver IU2 and Philadelphia IU26 are incorporated into Pittsburgh and Philadelphia school districts, respectively. Students in kindergarten through grade 12 who attend intermediate unit schools or classrooms for instruction are attributed and reported by their home district, even if the student receives instruction in another school in the district or in another school district.
[18] Students who attend part-time career and technical centers are attributed to their home school for data and reporting purposes. Students who attend full-time career and technical centers are attributed to the career and technical center.
[19] Pennsylvania has 500 school districts; however, one very small district in suburban Philadelphia enrolls no students: Bryn Athyn School District, http://www.brynathynschooldistrict.org/.
[20] Even if an LEA did not identify any students, students experiencing homelessness may have attended that LEA at some point during the program year either before a precipitating event or after becoming

the total K-12 population (14 LEAs), and/or enrolled few students from low-income families (10 LEAs).[21] In fact, many (14 LEAs) had a combination of these conditions. Each of these conditions provides a plausible rationale as to why an LEA did not have or identify any students experiencing homelessness.

Each year regional coordinators prioritize outreach to LEAs where no students are identified. As a result of these efforts, the number of entities not included in reporting or reporting zero students has consistently declined. However, outreach to charter schools remains a challenge. Liaison turnover appears to be more pervasive in charter schools and affects accurate and timely reporting. With new charter schools established each year, outreach to these LEAs is especially challenging.

To identify liaison changes in a timely fashion, evaluators sent automated email reminders about the importance of reporting children and youth experiencing homelessness. These reminders provided undeliverable notifications that were used by regional staff to follow up with these specific LEAs. Evaluators also conducted periodic data checks throughout the year to pinpoint LEAs that did not identify students. These LEAs were also referred to regional staff for follow-up. In addition to these activities, LEA monitoring served to increase awareness of the federal requirement. Each of these strategies contributed to fewer LEAs reporting zero students experiencing homelessness or not reporting at all each year. Since 2016-17 the total number of LEAs with no students identified decreased by over half (69 to 24).

ECYEH Program staff also reach out to non-LEAs including shelters and prekindergarten programs. As a result, a substantial portion of children and youth only reported by these entities were identified. Children and youth are only reported with a non-LEA entity if that entity is the only source of homeless identification, and no LEA information can be verified[22]. In the 2022-23 year, shelter data was collected from all counties.

With increased awareness and more accurate and complete reporting, more children and youth identified by shelter entities could be matched to their LEA and were reported with their LEA.

In 2022-23, 94 non-LEA entities[23] reported 7,985 children and youth (17 percent of identified children and youth) who could not be tied to an LEA. Many of the children and youth (4,813) reported by these facilities were birth to age 2, ages 3 to 5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten) or attended non-LEA prekindergarten programs. The reporting by non-LEA facilities has increased with ongoing coordinator outreach, state level collaboration, and increased awareness of reporting responsibilities of these entities.

Children and Youth Characteristics

In alignment with federal reporting requirements, children and youth experiencing homelessness are reported by their nighttime status (fixed, regular, adequate) and by their age or grade

housed. Likewise, students identified in a shelter with no identifying LEA and students in domestic violence shelters may have also attended a non-reporting LEA.

[21] The LEA's percent of low-income families was less than 40 percent.

[22] Children and youth identified by a non-LEA and an LEA are always reported with the LEA. Children and youth identified by a non-LEA only but with LEA information are also reported with the LEA.

[23] In every case, non-LEA entities are reported at the aggregate county level. As such, one non-LEA entity may be reporting several different sites within a county.

category. As a result of ESSA[24], the homeless definition that determines who is eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act shifted and children and youth awaiting foster care are no longer eligible. Further, the out-of-school population – youth who are age 21 or younger, have not graduated, and meet the definition of McKinney-Vento Act homelessness – are no longer reported unless they are enrolled in an LEA-operated high school in college (grade 13) program.

In 2022-23, 46,714 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness. This is an increase over the last two years (40,003 were identified in 2021-22 and 32,666 were identified in 2020-21). Typically, the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness increases in each year of program operation. This continued growth is a direct result of the ECYEH Program outreach to LEAs, shelters, and prekindergarten programs. Moving away from the pandemic, data indicate that the trend in increasing identification resumed in the 2021-22 program year and has continued, with 2022-23 indicating the highest reported attributed count historically. Additionally, the ECYEH program identified an increase in enrolled students experiencing homelessness: 34,043 in 2021-22 and 40,122 in 2022-23.

The sections that follow provide homeless information and demographics for identified children and youth experiencing homelessness based on all reported children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness at any point during the ECYEH Program year (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023).

PDE reports for 2022-23 year showed a public school (school districts, charter/cyber charter schools, comprehensive technical centers) October 1 enrollment count of 1,684,990 students.[25] In 2022-23, 40,122 of the 46,714 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness were enrolled in school. Students experiencing homelessness made up 2.4 percent of the total public school enrolled population; an increase from the prior year's 2.0 percent. For comparison, the rate was 1.6 percent in 2019-20. The 2022-23 national percentage of the enrolled population experiencing homelessness was 2.75 percent.[26]

Homeless information and demographics in this section reflect the required federal reporting elements: age/grade categories, nighttime status, unaccompanied youth status, disability categories, English learner status, migrant status, race/ethnicity, and economic disadvantaged status. Demographic information is not available for every individual identified. What exists is based upon the data source from which the information was collected. Each section that follows will indicate the population included in the demographic data element.

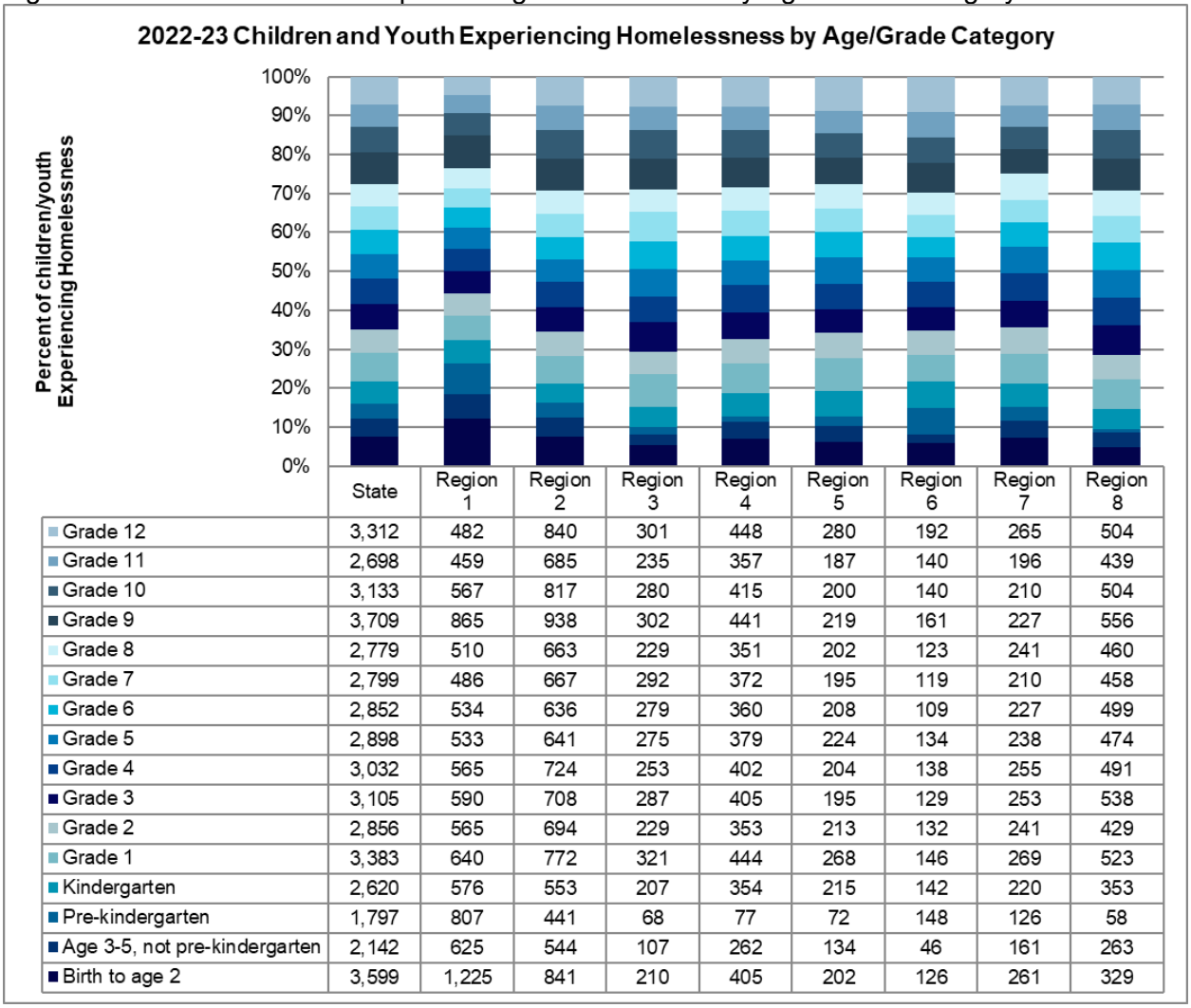
Figure 4 shows the age/grade breakdown of 46,714 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness. The federal reporting categories include birth to age 2, ages 3 to 5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten), prekindergarten (LEA or non-LEA prekindergarten programs), and kindergarten through grade 12 (including ungraded). No grade 13 students were identified as experiencing homelessness.

Statewide, the number of children and youth in each category was distributed at a fairly even rate. The ECYEH Program continued to see an increase in reporting of children under five (not yet in kindergarten). Generally, regions mirrored the percentage of students in each category at

[24] As of December 2016.
[25] https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment
[26] National Center for Homeless Education - National Overview: https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/ConsolidatedStateProfile.aspx

the state level, however, differences among regions in the prekindergarten categories are most likely reflective of differing migrant populations, differing numbers of prekindergarten programs (both LEA and non-LEA), differing numbers of shelters among the regions, the extent to which each of these reporting entities reported on children in the under-five categories, and the extent to which LEAs report on non-enrolled siblings of identified students.

Figure 4. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Age/Grade Category



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Grade 12	3,312	482	840	301	448	280	192	265	504
Grade 11	2,698	459	685	235	357	187	140	196	439
Grade 10	3,133	567	817	280	415	200	140	210	504
Grade 9	3,709	865	938	302	441	219	161	227	556
Grade 8	2,779	510	663	229	351	202	123	241	460
Grade 7	2,799	486	667	292	372	195	119	210	458
Grade 6	2,852	534	636	279	360	208	109	227	499
Grade 5	2,898	533	641	275	379	224	134	238	474
Grade 4	3,032	565	724	253	402	204	138	255	491
Grade 3	3,105	590	708	287	405	195	129	253	538
Grade 2	2,856	565	694	229	353	213	132	241	429
Grade 1	3,383	640	772	321	444	268	146	269	523
Kindergarten	2,620	576	553	207	354	215	142	220	353
Pre-kindergarten	1,797	807	441	68	77	72	148	126	58
Age 3-5, not pre-kindergarten	2,142	625	544	107	262	134	46	161	263
Birth to age 2	3,599	1,225	841	210	405	202	126	261	329

Nighttime status determines if a child or youth is identified as eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Nighttime status is a required federal reporting category for students enrolled in public prekindergarten through grade 12 schools. It was not required for the birth to 2 population or for children ages 3 to 5 and not enrolled in an LEA-operated prekindergarten program; therefore, while collected and used for program implementation and management purposes, inclusion in the report is limited to the federally required nighttime status age/grade categories.

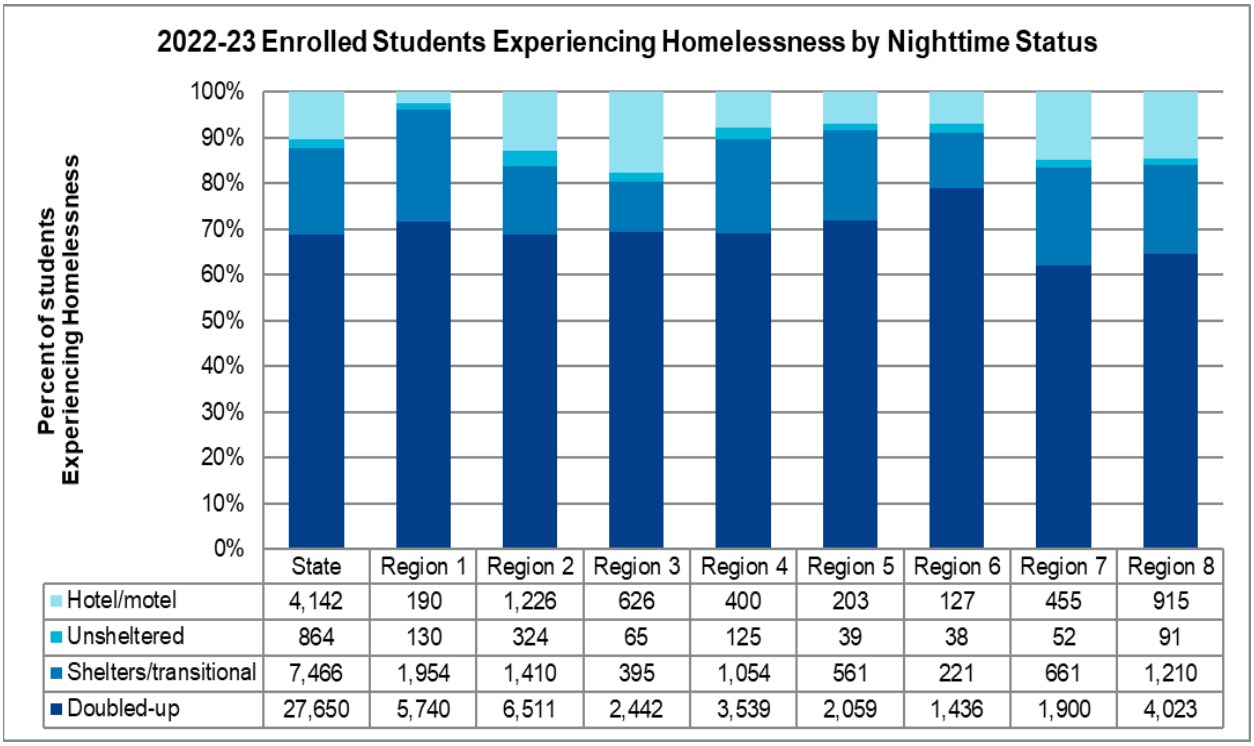
Nighttime status reporting categories include doubled-up, hotel or motel, shelter and transitional housing, and unsheltered. Per federal requirements, only the first nighttime status category is reported; however, children and youth may experience different nighttime statuses throughout the year.

Figure 5 shows the nighttime status for the 40,122 students who were enrolled in school, prekindergarten programs through grade 12.

Overall, 69 percent of students had a nighttime status of doubled-up and 19 percent of students had shelter as their nighttime status category. Despite increased data collection from shelters, these proportions are similar to prior years when fewer shelters received services and therefore shared data with the ECYEH program. This similarity suggests that students identified by shelters are, for the most part, also reported by the LEAs they attend.

Region 1 continues to implement specific strategies to better identify the doubled-up population, and their efforts are showing a steady increase in the reporting of that population. Their doubled-up counts increased from 402 students in 2010-11 to 5,740 students in 2022-23. The total doubled-up population count in 2022-23 (5,740) exceeds 2021-22 (4,301), indicating the overall improvement in capturing doubled-up counts within the region. Prior to 2010-11, the focus in Region 1 had been with shelters.

Figure 5. The majority of enrolled students experiencing homelessness were doubled up or in a shelter.



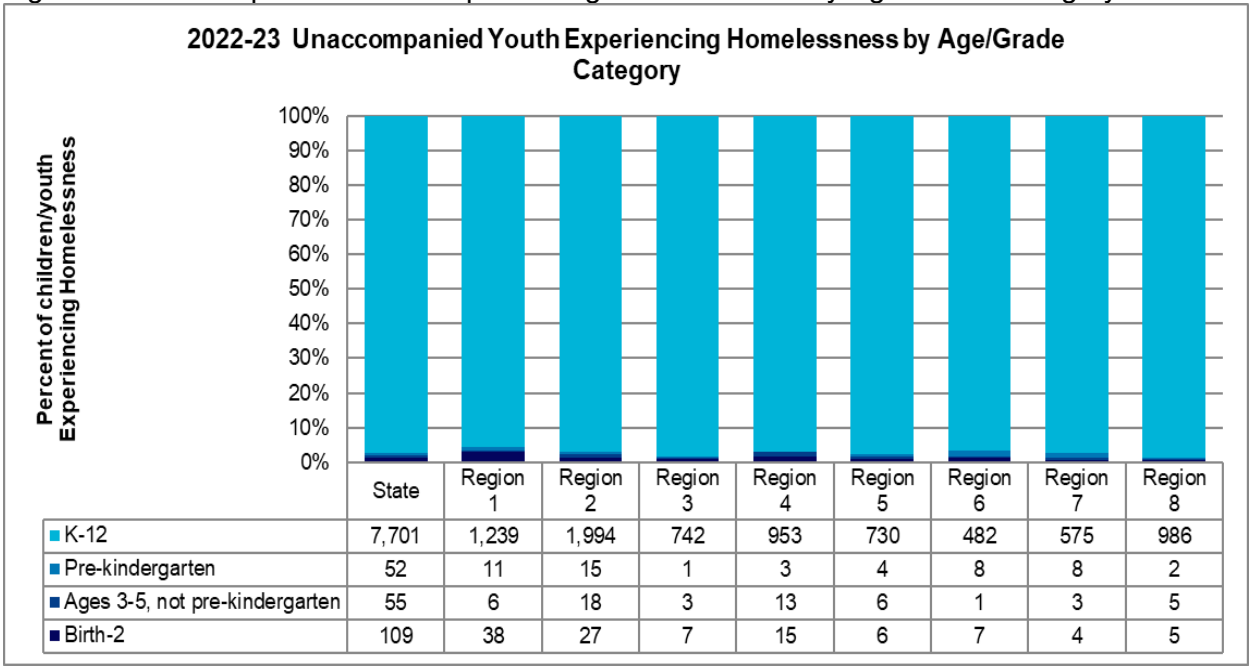
	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Hotel/motel	4,142	190	1,226	626	400	203	127	455	915
Unsheltered	864	130	324	65	125	39	38	52	91
Shelters/transitional	7,466	1,954	1,410	395	1,054	561	221	661	1,210
Doubled-up	27,650	5,740	6,511	2,442	3,539	2,059	1,436	1,900	4,023

Unaccompanied youth is a federally defined term. Children or youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness may also be identified as an “unaccompanied youth,” meaning the child is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. An unaccompanied youth can be any age, birth to 21 years old.[27]

[27] This definition of unaccompanied youth differs from the HUD definition, which extends to under 25 years of age http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless.

Overall, 7,917 (17 percent) of the 46,714 children and youth were identified as unaccompanied youth. This proportion has stayed the same over the past few years. The majority of unaccompanied youth statewide (97 percent) were in grades K – 12. The percentage of unaccompanied youth in grades K-12 by region mirrored the state percentage, ranging from 95 – 99 percent. Statewide, the other three percent of unaccompanied youth were birth-2, ages 3-5 but no prekindergarten, or prekindergarten. Again, the regions mirrored the state percentages ranging from 1.2 to 4.2 percent in these categories. Figure 6 shows the age/grade breakdown of 7,917 children and youth identified as unaccompanied and experiencing homelessness.

Figure 6. Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Age/Grade Category



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
K-12	7,701	1,239	1,994	742	953	730	482	575	986
Pre-kindergarten	52	11	15	1	3	4	8	8	2
Ages 3-5, not pre-kindergarten	55	6	18	3	13	6	1	3	5
Birth-2	109	38	27	7	15	6	7	4	5

Specific special education status information was collected from the PIMS extract for students enrolled in school. Additionally, evaluators coded children identified in early intervention programs as receiving special education services. They are included in either the developmental delay or the infant/toddler designation depending on the age/grade category. Students identified only in HMIS (shelter) reporting with a designation of disability are included; however, this designation in most cases did not specify the type of disability.

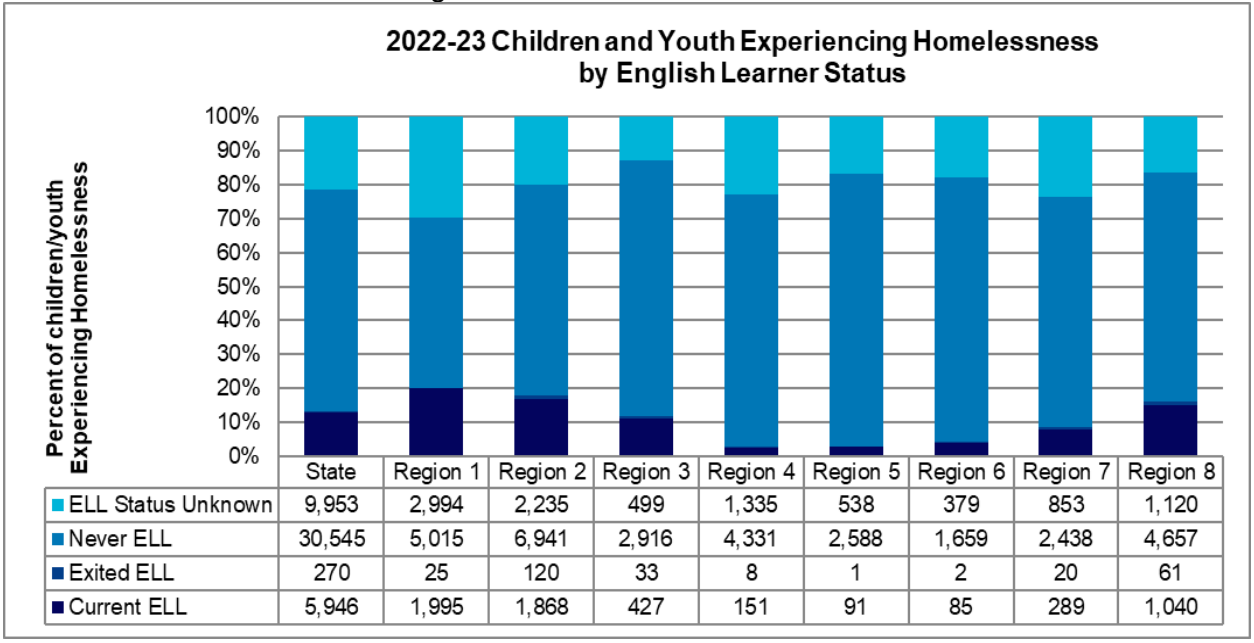
Of the 46,714 identified children and youth, 12,011 (26 percent) were identified as having a disability. Of these 12,011, the largest percentage of individuals (35 percent) were categorized as having a “specific learning disability.” Both the proportion of children and youth identified as having a disability and the proportion of those categorized as having a “specific learning disability” are similar to the prior year – 25 percent and 36 percent, respectively. Table 1 shows the breakdown by disability type using the federal reporting categories. In categories for which 10 or fewer children or youth were identified, the values and corresponding proportions are suppressed and represented by an asterisk (*) to comply with PDE confidentiality protocols. Because of small numbers in several of the categories, regional findings are not included.

Table 1. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Disability Category

Disability Category	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Specific learning disability	4,257	35%
Other health impairment	2,213	18%
Emotional disturbance	1,510	13%
Speech or language impairment	1,061	9%
Intellectual disability	868	7%
Autistic/autism	869	7%
Disability type unknown	748	6%
Developmental delay	122	1%
Infants and toddlers with disabilities	137	1%
Multiple disabilities	124	1%
Hearing impairment including deafness	53	<1%
Visual impairment including blindness	23	<1%
Traumatic brain injury	13	<1%
Orthopedic impairment	13	<1%
Deaf-Blindness	*	*

English learner information was also collected through PIMS for all enrolled students and through MIS2000 for migrant children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness. English learner information was not collected for children and youth only identified through the HMIS (shelter) system or for the non-enrolled under-five population, excepting migrant children also designated as experiencing homelessness. English learners comprise 13 percent of the children and youth experiencing homelessness. Regions 1 and 2 had the most English learners (20 percent and 17 percent, respectively), followed by Region 8 (15 percent). Each of these regions reflects historical migrant patterns and consistently have the highest numbers of English learners.

Figure 7. Regions 1, 2 and 8 had the highest number of children and youth experiencing homelessness who were also English Learners.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
ELL Status Unknown	9,953	2,994	2,235	499	1,335	538	379	853	1,120
Never ELL	30,545	5,015	6,941	2,916	4,331	2,588	1,659	2,438	4,657
Exited ELL	270	25	120	33	8	1	2	20	61
Current ELL	5,946	1,995	1,868	427	151	91	85	289	1,040

Migrant status can be determined for all children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness. Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program (PA-MEP) captures homeless

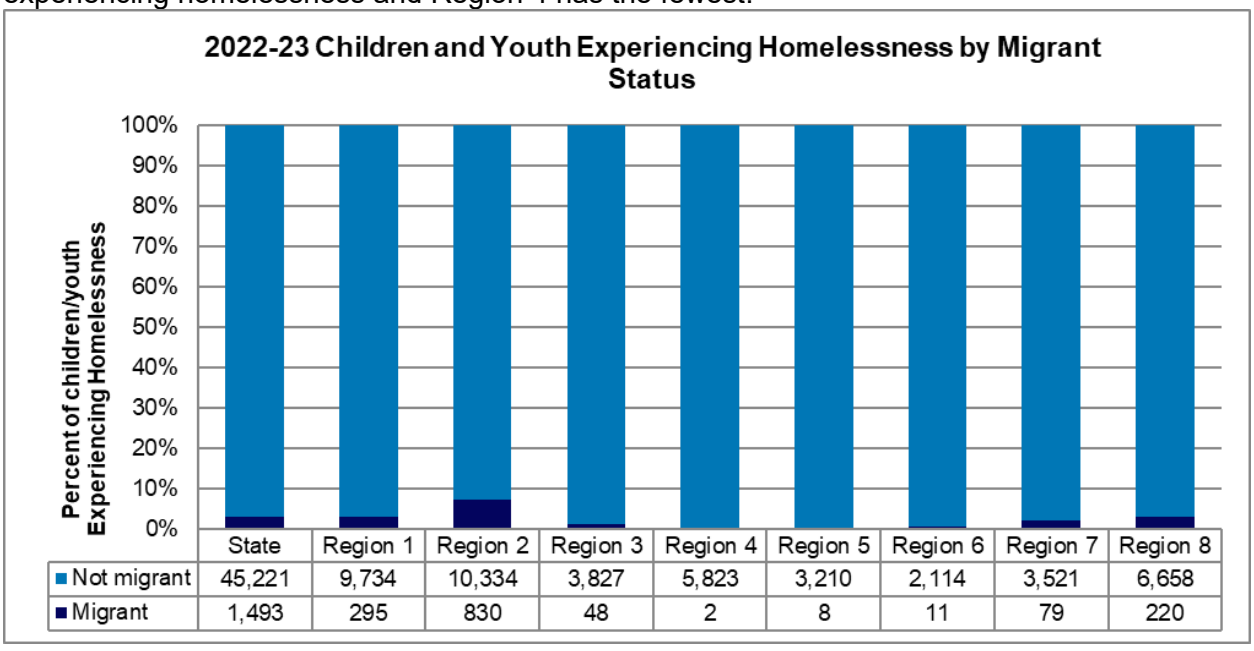
eligibility information in their comprehensive needs assessment. As such, the migrant status of all eligible children and youth experiencing homelessness is documented.

Of the 46,714 identified children and youth, 3 percent (1,493) were identified as eligible for services through PA-MEP. This number and percentage are very similar to the prior year which was also 3 percent (1,207 children and youth).

The numbers of migrant children and youth vary considerably across Pennsylvania depending on where qualifying migrant work is located. While migrant children and youth only make up 3 percent of the total homeless served population, it is important to note the differences among the ECYEH regions. Migrant status may also influence other demographics such as English learner status, mobility, or economic status, especially in the regions where there is a larger migrant population.

There are greater migrant-qualifying work opportunities in the eastern half of Pennsylvania (Regions 2, 1, 8, and 7). As such, the numbers of migrant youth experiencing homelessness are greater in these regions than in the rest of the state. Figure 8 shows that Region 2 has the largest numbers of migrant children and youth.

Figure 8. Region 2 has the largest number of migrant children and youth who are also experiencing homelessness and Region 4 has the fewest.



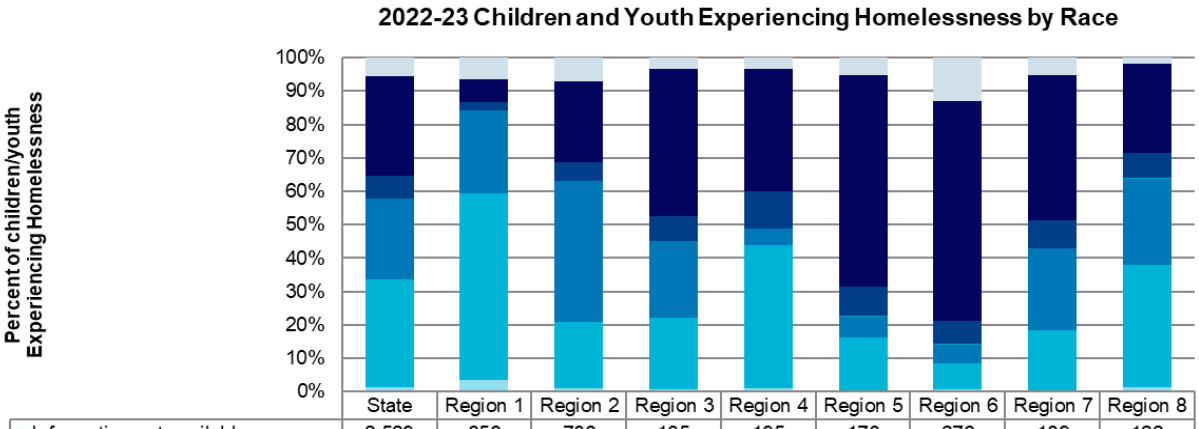
	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Not migrant	45,221	9,734	10,334	3,827	5,823	3,210	2,114	3,521	6,658
Migrant	1,493	295	830	48	2	8	11	79	220

Race and ethnicity data was collected through the PIMS extract for all enrolled students and through the MIS2000 extract for migrant children and youth also identified as experiencing homelessness. In most cases, HMIS extracts also provided race and ethnicity information. Race and ethnicity information is available for 95 percent of the identified children and youth. It is likely that the unknown population would reflect the ethnic and racial composition of their region, though it cannot be assumed.

2022-23 federal race reporting categories are presented in Figure 9. The proportions of children and youth experiencing homelessness in the federal race categories have remained relatively consistent each year, though disaster-displaced children and youth elevated the Hispanic/Latino

percentage in 2017-18 to 24 percent. In 2022-23 Hispanic/Latino individuals comprised 24 percent of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Black or African American comprised 32 percent and White comprised 30 percent of identified children and youth. Race varies by region, reflecting the population of each region. For example, Regions 1 (Philadelphia) and 4 (Pittsburgh) have large urban areas with greater diversity; Regions 5 and 6 (northwest and north central PA) are more rural and homogeneous; and Region 2 (southeastern PA) has large Hispanic/Latino communities.

Figure 9. The racial categories of children and youth experiencing homelessness varies by region and has remained relatively consistent over time.

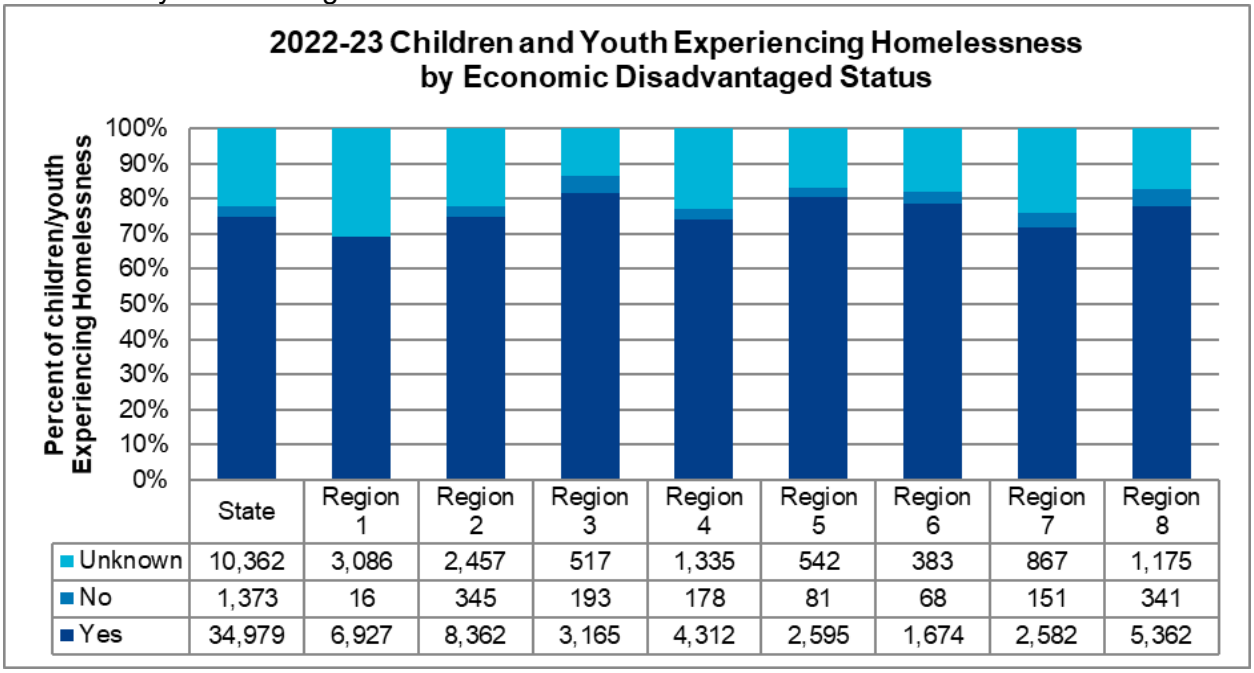


	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Information not available	2,529	656	786	135	195	170	276	189	122
White	14,038	666	2,695	1,706	2,129	2,034	1,398	1,563	1,847
Two or more races	3,077	248	642	290	649	285	148	301	514
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	51	16	12	1	9	1	4	2	6
Hispanic/Latino	11,347	2,484	4,710	880	289	201	117	886	1,780
Black or African American	14,968	5,612	2,199	838	2,487	512	165	639	2,516
Asian	592	336	87	17	52	7	15	8	70
American Indian or Alaska Native	112	11	33	8	15	8	2	12	23

Economic disadvantage information was collected from PIMS for all enrolled students. It is also an eligibility criterion for all children who attend Early Head Start or Head Start programs. As such, evaluators were able to code prekindergarten children known to attend Head Start or Early Head Start programs as being economically disadvantaged.

Of the 46,714 identified children and youth, 75 percent were designated as economically disadvantaged, and 3 percent were reported as not economically disadvantaged. Nearly three-quarters of the 22 percent of children and youth whose economic status is unknown were identified in shelters. While some portion, or even a majority, of such children and youth may be economically disadvantaged, because the information is not collected for these populations, it cannot be assumed.

Figure 10. The majority of children and youth experiencing homelessness across the state are economically disadvantaged.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Unknown	10,362	3,086	2,457	517	1,335	542	383	867	1,175
No	1,373	16	345	193	178	81	68	151	341
Yes	34,979	6,927	8,362	3,165	4,312	2,595	1,674	2,582	5,362

LEA Demographics

Enrollment from low-income families and urban-centric locale of the LEA provide further information regarding the communities of the schools that identified students attended. PDE produces a public report that delineates LEA enrollment by low-income families.[28] This report is based on LEA enrollment of economically disadvantaged students by October 1, 2022, and shows the number and percentage of total enrollment from low-income families in each LEA and in each school building.

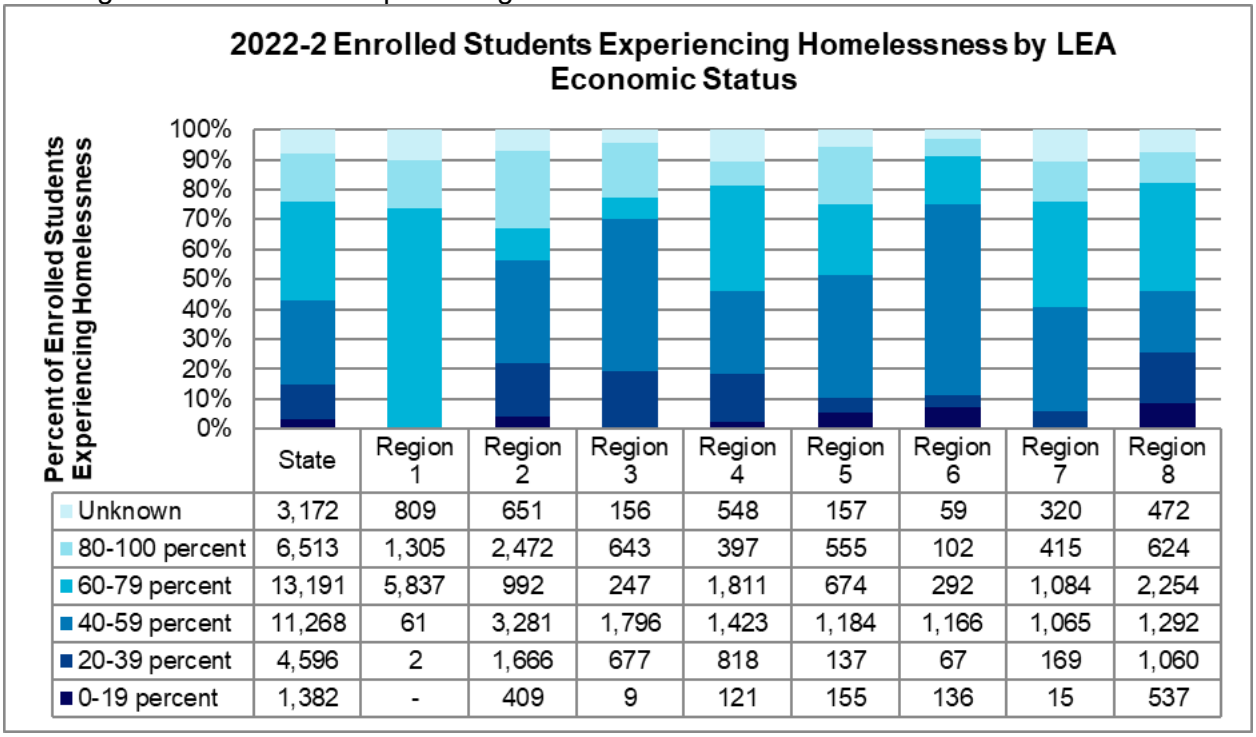
For this analysis, LEAs were grouped into low-income bands: 0-19 percent low-income enrollment, 20-39 percent, 40-59 percent, 60-79 percent, and 80-100 percent. Figure 11 shows the proportion and count of enrolled students experiencing homelessness attending LEAs in each band.

LEAs with a low-income identification rate of 40 percent or more are considered high-poverty LEAs. Overall, 77 percent of enrolled students experiencing homelessness (30,972) attended LEAs that had 40 percent or more of the total student population described as low income or high poverty. This information was unknown for the 8 percent of the enrolled population (3,172) identified by shelters only that did not provide LEA information. Region 1 had 90 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs with Region 6 having 86 percent and Regions 5 and 7 each having 84 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs. Region 3 had 76 percent of identified students attending high-poverty LEAs, and Regions 2 and 4 each had 71 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs. Region 8 had the lowest percentage of students, 67 percent attending high-poverty LEAs.

[28] https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/LoanCanLowIncome/Pages/PublicSchools.aspx

It is important to note that poverty is a factor for the student body and the community at large where students identified as experiencing homelessness attended school. Further, while pervasive poverty is a factor, 15 percent of students experiencing homelessness (5,978) attended LEAs with lower rates of low-income enrollment.

Figure 11. Region 1 had the highest percentage of students who attended high poverty LEAs and Region 8 had the lowest percentage.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Unknown	3,172	809	651	156	548	157	59	320	472
80-100 percent	6,513	1,305	2,472	643	397	555	102	415	624
60-79 percent	13,191	5,837	992	247	1,811	674	292	1,084	2,254
40-59 percent	11,268	61	3,281	1,796	1,423	1,184	1,166	1,065	1,292
20-39 percent	4,596	2	1,666	677	818	137	67	169	1,060
0-19 percent	1,382	-	409	9	121	155	136	15	537

In 2009-10, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) used an urban-centric locale code system to classify LEAs.[29] The urban-centric locale code system uses 12 categories to designate region type and population size and replaced the previously used eight metro-centric locale codes. The 12 category descriptions can be found on the NCES website.[30] Evaluators further collapsed these 12 categories to gain a simplified picture of the key categories: city, suburb, town, rural, and unknown.

Figure 12 shows enrolled students experiencing homelessness by their LEA's locale code. The 'could not be determined' category includes 2,419 students (6 percent) who attended an LEA that served multiple geographic areas, most typically intermediate unit prekindergarten programs and cyber charter schools. Each cyber charter school may serve students across the commonwealth; their regional designation is only an indicator of the location of their central office. Again, 8 percent of enrolled students (3,172) were identified by shelters only that did not provide LEA information. These students are captured in the 'unknown' category.

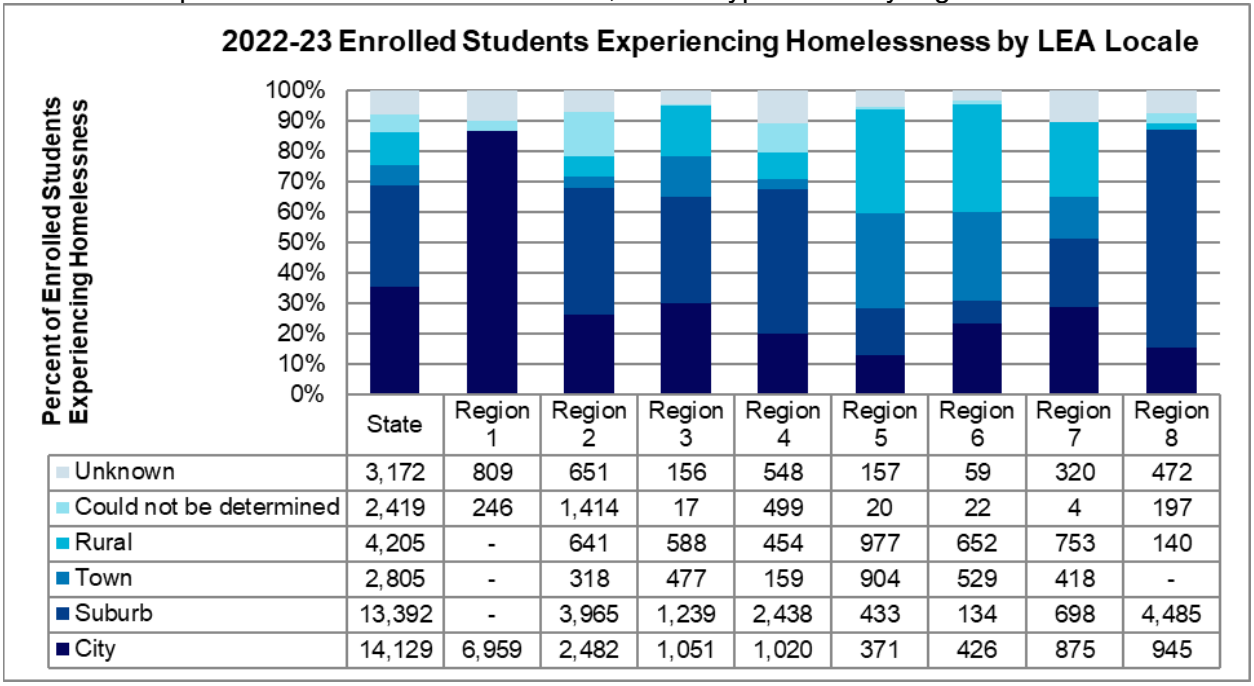
Overall, 35 percent of enrolled students experiencing homelessness (14,129) attended LEAs categorized as city and 33 percent (13,392) attended LEAs categorized as suburb. This is notably different than the overall proportions of enrolled students attending LEAs designated as

[29] https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/SchoolLocale
[30] https://nces.ed.gov/programs/handbook/data/pdf/appendix_d.pdf

city (20 percent) and suburb (51 percent) in Pennsylvania. LEAs located in city locales identify significantly higher numbers of students experiencing homelessness in total and as a proportion of all enrolled students.

Distinct variations can also be seen across the regions, with Region 1 being almost exclusively city; Regions 2, 4, and 8 having large suburban populations; Regions 5, 6, and 7 having more town and rural populations; and Region 3 serving a mix of locale types. The variations across the regions contribute to differences in the numbers and types of agencies and resources that exist to support children, youth, or families experiencing homelessness and should be considered when examining regional outcomes.

Figure 12. Statewide, 35 percent of students experiencing homelessness attended city-based LEAs and 33 percent attended suburban LEAs; Locale type varies by region.



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
Unknown	3,172	809	651	156	548	157	59	320	472
Could not be determined	2,419	246	1,414	17	499	20	22	4	197
Rural	4,205	-	641	588	454	977	652	753	140
Town	2,805	-	318	477	159	904	529	418	-
Suburb	13,392	-	3,965	1,239	2,438	433	134	698	4,485
City	14,129	6,959	2,482	1,051	1,020	371	426	875	945

PROGRAM IMPACT

Program impact findings reveal the extent to which the anticipated outcomes for children and youth served by the ECYEH Program occurred. Anticipated child and youth outcomes include reducing or eliminating enrollment or education barriers, remaining in the school of origin, and receiving services aligned with the authorized activities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. Student attendance and academic outcomes are also included in this section. This information comes from the service delivery portions of the ECYEH student-level data collection, the bulk supplies portion of the technical assistance web-based reporting process, PIMS, MIS2000, and shelter reporting.

Barriers

Barriers are situations that interfere with children and youth's enrollment, attendance, and/or educational success. Barrier information is only reported by LEAs or ECYEH staff that worked to

resolve a barrier situation. As the understanding of barriers has improved, reporting of barriers has increased, though this still varies considerably by LEA. Of enrolled children and youth, 72 percent (29,052 of 40,122) had barrier data, of which 24 percent (7,027) were reported as having barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. Table 2 shows the prevalence of barriers that LEAs or ECYEH Program staff reported statewide and by region.

Table 2. Barriers to School Enrollment for Students Experiencing Homelessness

		Region							
Barriers	**State**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Determining eligibility for homeless services	3,628	327	2,145	254	309	54	28	140	371
Transportation	2,787	527	774	209	477	306	21	114	359
Obtaining other medical records	637	134	407	8	48	18	2	10	10
Immunization records	987	151	663	45	65	18	3	31	11
School Records	958	221	510	56	85	27	5	30	24
School Selection	752	66	428	116	76	37	9	5	15
Other	2,356	1,765	133	157	145	40	23	38	55
Any barriers	3,628	327	2,145	254	309	54	28	140	371
Total youth for whom data was available	**29,052**	**3,204**	**7,813**	**3,047**	**3,680**	**2,393**	**1,592**	**2,283**	**5,040**
Percentage of youth with any barrier	**24%**	**67%**	**32%**	**12%**	**17%**	**15%**	**5%**	**13%**	**13%**

The most common barrier identified at both the state and regional levels was determining if a student met the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness and was, therefore, eligible to receive ECYEH services and support. This is often a barrier because there is sometimes confusion among schools or agencies over the applicable definition of homelessness; McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness is different from the HUD definition. This is why ECYEH outreach, awareness, and building understanding is ongoing. Also, families and youth are sometimes reluctant to share accurate information about their housing situation, which is necessary to determine ECYEH eligibility.

Transportation is the second most-indicated obstacle. Transportation becomes a challenge particularly when a child or youth moves to a new location within or outside their original school and/or when a child or youth makes frequent moves. As transportation to their school of origin is a right of identified children and youth experiencing homelessness, each time a child or youth moves to a new location, new transportation arrangements need to be made. When a child or youth moves outside their district of origin, the district of origin and the district of residency need to work together to accommodate transportation needs. Transportation issues may also arise because of unique family situations and unaccompanied youth circumstances.

Other barriers reported included school breaks or holidays, hospitalization between identification and attendance, securing childcare, incomplete disclosure of information during enrollment, or family-initiated delays in attendance. Determining if a student is eligible for homeless service and transportation have consistently been the top two barriers.

In some cases, items reported as barriers are actually rights regarding school enrollment for students experiencing homelessness. Those rights include immediate enrollment without medical or immunization records. There continues to be an ongoing effort of educating LEAs about the rights of students under the Mc-Kinney-Vento Act through ongoing professional development, on-call LEA technical assistance, and annual monitoring visits.

There has been ongoing interest related to barriers for the under-five population yet a considerable portion (76 percent) of the under-five age group (7,538 children) are children birth to age 2 (3,599 children) or children ages 3 to 5 not enrolled in prekindergarten (2,142 children) for whom barriers to enrollment do not apply. Program access could be the issue that needs addressed for those children ages 3 to 5, identified as experiencing homelessness, and not enrolled in any prekindergarten programming; coordinators continue to support coordination and collaboration for this population.

The LEA prekindergarten group is the only one where barrier information is collected unless ECYEH staff actively worked to remove a barrier for a child attending a non-LEA prekindergarten program. Of the 1,797 children identified as experiencing homelessness who attended a prekindergarten program (LEA and non-LEA), 36 percent (650 children) had barrier data. Of those 650 children, 171 children (26 percent) were identified as having one or more barriers. Similar to the enrolled population, determining eligibility for services was the primary barrier indicated.

Student Mobility

Eligible students have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is determined to be in their best interest. To examine student mobility, evaluators identified every school in which a student attended during the program year, July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, regardless of whether every LEA they attended identified the student as experiencing homelessness.

Of the 40,122 enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness, LEA/school mobility was determined for 36,950 students (92 percent). The ‘unable to determine’ group (3,172 students) represents students who were reported as being enrolled in school but did not have enough information to be able to determine their mobility.

Table 3 shows the number and the percentage of enrolled students grouped by number of LEA/school combinations. Seventy-three percent of enrolled students remained in their LEA/school combination during the program year, 17 percent of students enrolled in two LEA/school combinations, and 3 percent enrolled in three or more LEA/school combinations.

While a majority of students (29,242) remained in one LEA/school combination, there are many students (7,708; 19 percent) who changed their LEA/school during the program year.
This is consistent when compared to the prior year; during the 2021-22 program year, 6,419 (19 percent of enrolled students) enrolled in more than one LEA/school combination. It is also possible that students for whom mobility could not be determined (3,172) experienced at least one move during the year.

Table 3. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Mobility

Region	Total	1 LEA/ School	2 LEAs/ Schools	>2 LEAs/ Schools	Unable to Determine	% 1 LEA/ School	% 2 LEAs/ Schools	% >2 LEAs/ Schools	% Unable to Determine
1	8,014	5,872	1,154	179	809	73%	14%	2%	10%
2	9,471	7,162	1,465	193	651	76%	15%	2%	7%
3	3,528	2,598	655	119	156	74%	19%	3%	4%
4	5,118	3,380	1,014	176	548	66%	20%	3%	11%
5	2,862	2,079	533	93	157	73%	19%	3%	5%
6	1,822	1,327	370	66	59	73%	20%	4%	3%
7	3,068	2,093	555	100	320	68%	18%	3%	10%
8	6,239	4,731	928	108	472	76%	15%	2%	8%
State Total	**40,122**	**29,242**	**6,674**	**1,034**	**3,172**	**73%**	**17%**	**3%**	**8%**

Service Delivery

Students experiencing homelessness have the right to support services that promote academic success. As such, the McKinney-Vento Act outlines authorized activities for which funds can be used. This section of the report addresses services provided to eligible children and youth. Services reported in this section may have been provided through multiple sources including the ECYEH Program directly or with McKinney-Vento Act funds, LEAs, prekindergarten programs, PA-MEP, or shelters. Documentation of these services was reported through the service delivery section of the ECYEH data collection process, PIMS, MIS2000, and domestic violence shelter reporting.

Information was compiled for every child and youth and categorized by McKinney-Vento Act authorized activity. Those categories include: tutoring or other instructional support; expedited evaluations; referrals for medical, dental, and other health services; transportation; early childhood programs; assistance with participation in school programs; before school, afterschool, mentoring, and summer programs; obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment; coordination between schools and agencies; counseling; addressing needs related to domestic violence; clothing to meet school requirements; school supplies; referrals to other programs and services; emergency assistance related to school attendance; and other services not previously listed. Other services included hygiene items, clothing donations, or gift cards. A relatively new and increasing service is providing after school or weekend backpacks filled with food items.

Many children and youth were designated as receiving instructional support services. These included children who were identified as attending federal, state, or locally funded prekindergarten programs, receiving services from the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, or identified as receiving special education or Title III services. Likewise, any student attending a Title I school-wide school was identified as having received instructional support because school-wide schools may use Title I funds to upgrade curriculum of the school; all students in a school-wide building benefit from Title I funds and services. Children and youth identified by a domestic violence shelter were designated as receiving services that addressed needs related to domestic violence. ECYEH staff report on direct and indirect services they provide to a child, their family, LEAs, and other service providers. This information is reported in the program implementation section of the report. Services in each category were documented by the funding source for the service: Title I, McKinney-Vento, or other funds. Other funds included services or programming offered by the

LEA, prekindergarten programs, PA-MEP, shelters, collaborating agencies and organizations, or donations.

All services documented here were reported at the individual level. Although service delivery documentation has improved each year, it should also be noted that there is no way to ensure that those who reported data indicated all services provided or selected the correct funding option. Additionally, each region has varying levels of other funding resources available, and varying collaborations with entities that work with children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that a majority of children, youth, and families identified as experiencing homelessness are receiving support in one or more of the designated areas.

Overall, 89 percent (41,442) of the 46,714 identified children and youth were documented as receiving service at the individual level. This was an increase from the prior program year (80 percent in 2021-22) and may be a result of increased ARP-HCY/ESSER funding to support these services. Region 6 showed the largest proportion of children and youth receiving services followed by Regions 2, 3, and 5.

Table 4 shows state level results for the designated services and the funding sources for those services. Tutoring or other instructional support was by far the most prevalent service children and youth received. This is influenced by the number of students attending school-wide Title I schools and the number of children and youth who received additional educational services such as prekindergarten programs, special education, or Title I services. Transportation, school supplies, assistance with participation in school programs, and clothing to meet a school requirement were the next largest cluster of services children and youth received when all funding categories were examined. ARP-HCY II funds were available to LEAs either individually or through a Consortium to support additional services. Over 5,500 students were reported as receiving services through ARP-HCY/ESSER funds. However, these students could have also received services through the traditional funding sources. While the additional funds supported all services listed below, school supplies, transportation, clothing to meet a school requirement, tutoring, and assistance with participation in school programs were the top services for which ARP-HCY/ESSER funds were used. LEA use of ARP-HCY II funds is highlighted in the Implementation Survey section of this report.

Table 4. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Service Type and Funding Source

Service	Title I	McKinney-Vento	Other
Tutoring or other instructional support	38,184	71	20,080
Clothing to meet a school requirement	2,404	696	1,729
Transportation	2,996	871	4,813
School supplies	2,382	1,407	3,471
Other services	1,092	594	3,200
Expedited evaluations	437	137	442
Assistance with participation in school programs	1,401	2,195	2,178
Counseling	1,211	573	2,849
Coordination between schools and agencies	1,060	605	2,224
Referral to other programs and services	918	144	3,562
Before-, after-school, mentoring, summer programs	1,245	148	1,973
Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services	689	313	3,100
Early childhood programs	297	56	1,255
Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment	952	308	588
Emergency assistance related to school attendance	400	6	690
Addressing needs related to domestic violence	430	81	2,774
Unique count children/youth receiving Title I services	**38,186**		
Unique count children/youth receiving McKinney-Vento services		**4,379**	
Unique count children/youth receiving Other services			**27,415**

When examining individual funding sources, tutoring and instructional support remained the number one service provided under Title I and other funds. For Title I funds, transportation, clothing to meet a school requirement, and school supplies were the next most common services provided. McKinney-Vento Act funds were most frequently used for assistance with participation in school programs. School supplies, transportation, and clothing to meet a school requirement were the next most common services offered. For other funds, transportation and school supplies were the second and third most common services provided.

Some services listed in Table 4 are provided by the ECYEH Program using McKinney-Vento Act funds and are not captured at the individual student level: bus passes, clothing, hygiene items, school supplies (backpacks, college preparation materials, curriculum materials), fees for school activities, or recreational, social, or holiday activities and events. These services were typically provided in bulk and the individual recipient was unknown. This information is captured in the Technical Assistance and Bulk Supply section of the web-based data collection system. Details regarding technical assistance and bulk supplies provided by the ECYEH Program are detailed earlier in the report.

Table 5 provides counts of children and youth served by funding source, where each child or youth is counted once within that funding source category, statewide and by region. For context, the number of unique children and youth receiving individual services, the total number of children and youth, and the percentage of children or youth receiving individual services is also provided.

Table 5. Children and Youth Served by Region and by Funding Source

	State	Region							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Unique count of children/youth receiving Title I services	38,186	7,678	9,370	3,427	4,599	2,722	1,777	2,772	5,841
Unique count of children/youth receiving MV services	4,379	2,799	482	32	304	399	49	205	109
Unique count of children/youth receiving Other services	27,415	5,589	8,182	1,940	2,949	1,861	1,138	1,930	3,826
Total children/youth receiving services	**41,442**	**8,344**	**10,506**	**3,528**	**4,965**	**2,918**	**2,022**	**3,093**	**6,066**
Total children/youth from whom data was available	**46,714**	**10,029**	**11,164**	**3,875**	**5,825**	**3,218**	**2,125**	**3,600**	**6,878**
Proportion of children/youth with any services	**89%**	**83%**	**94%**	**91%**	**85%**	**91%**	**95%**	**86%**	**88%**

Title I Services

All students identified as experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of whether their school is a Title I school or the student has an academic need.[31] LEAs must reserve (or set aside) the funds necessary to serve children and youth experiencing homelessness who do not attend Title I schools, including educational-related support services. As described in the service delivery section previously, receipt of Title I services is collected or designated in several ways. And, as indicated in Table 4, 38,186 students (95 percent of 40,122 enrolled students) were documented as receiving Title I services. Those services were mostly tutoring or other instructional support.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Academic outcomes highlighted in this section include school attendance, graduation, and dropout results[32].

For federal reporting, the designated PDE departments use the homeless flag to prepare their department's *EDFacts* files. *EDFacts* homeless subgroup reporting outcomes are available on the *EDFacts* website.[33]

[31] When school enrollment from low-income families reaches or exceeds 40 percent of total enrollment, the school is eligible to apply for school-wide Title I funds. These school-wide schools may use funds to provide support and services available to all enrolled students regardless of their economic status. When enrollment from low-income families is below 40 percent, Title I programs are designed to help specific children and are targeted assisted programs.

[32] As noted in the Evaluation Design and Activities section of this report, evaluators provide the homeless flag to PDE for all enrolled students and requests available data for those students. Evaluators examine all available data for students experiencing homelessness. Evaluators do not have the capacity to identify students to exclude or include based on various reporting criteria for PSSA, school attendance, graduation, or drop out. This analysis provides an overall snapshot of academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

[33] https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts

State Academic Assessments: PSSA/PASA and Keystone Exam

State academic assessment data for 2022-23 includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), and the Keystone Exams. The PSSA is given in reading, math, science, and writing. The reading and math assessments are given in grades 3-8; the science assessment is given in grades 4 and 8[34]; and the writing assessment is administered in grades 5 and 8. The PASA assesses students with the most severe cognitive disabilities in four grade level spans (grades 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8, and 11). Students can re-take the Keystone Exams until they demonstrate proficiency. Once they score at the proficient level, their scores are banked and used for grade 11 state and federal assessment and accountability reporting. This means that students taking the Keystone Exams who are not yet in grade 11 are being tested on grade 11 standards and content. As such, Keystone Exam data may not be used for accountability or reporting until they are enrolled in grade 11. All students enrolled in public school in these grades should participate in the appropriate state assessments unless they meet one of the exemption criteria.

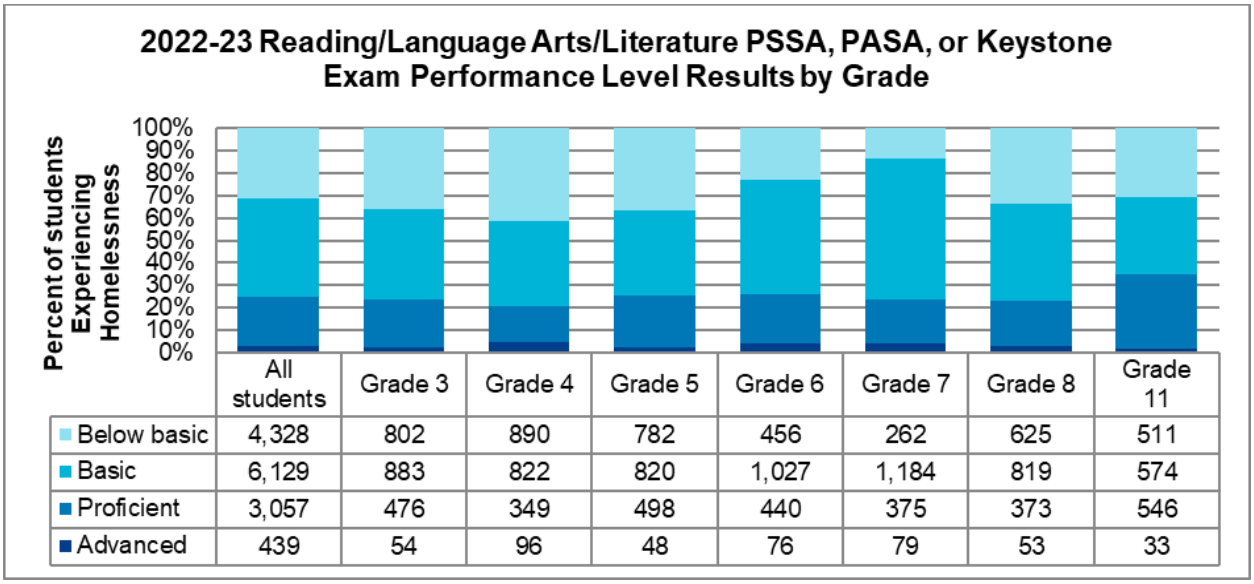
For the purposes of this program, analysis was conducted on reading, math, and science PSSA data; reading, math, and science PASA data; and literature, Algebra I, and biology Keystone Exam data.

During the 2022-23 school year, 20,163 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the reading PSSA (grades 3-8), the literature Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the reading PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11), of which 13,953 students (69 percent) had PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results available. [35] Figure 13 shows student results in reading/literature by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Figure 13. Overall, 25 percent of children and youth experiencing homelessness scored at a proficient or advanced level in Reading, Language Arts, or Literature.

[34] In 2025, the science PSSA will transition from grades 4 and 8 to grades 5 and 8. It will be administered as a census field test during the 2024-25 school year, however, scores from the field test will not be included in any local or state reporting systems. In the year of this report, it was still being administered to fourth grade students.

[35] English Learner students who have not been in the United States for at least one year are exempt from taking the Reading/Literature Exam.

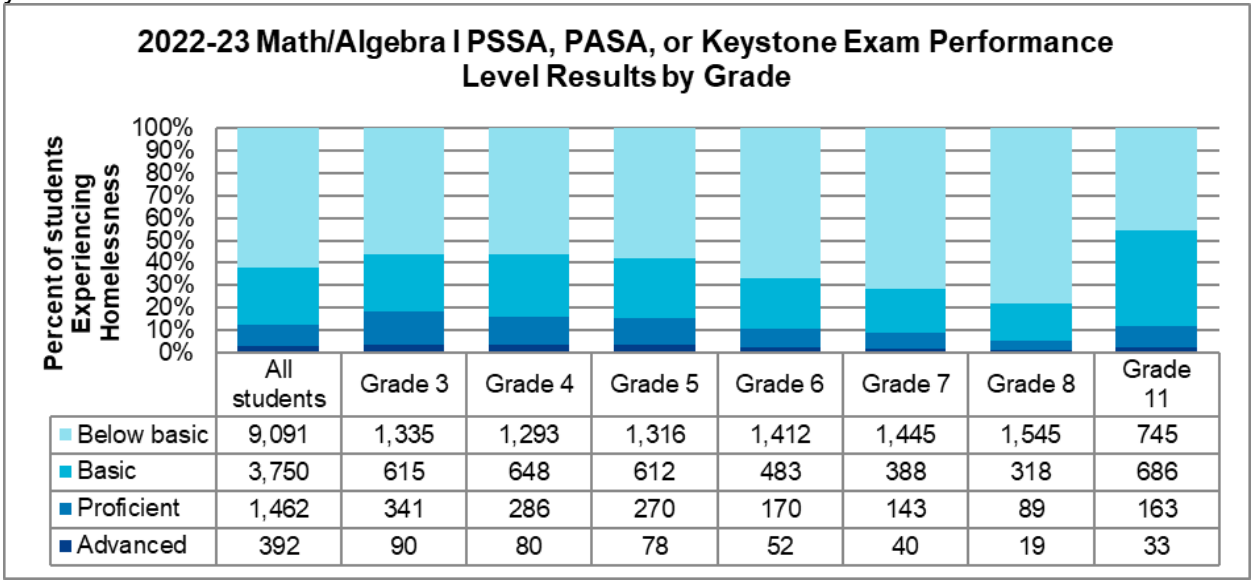


	All students	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
Below basic	4,328	802	890	782	456	262	625	511
Basic	6,129	883	822	820	1,027	1,184	819	574
Proficient	3,057	476	349	498	440	375	373	546
Advanced	439	54	96	48	76	79	53	33

Overall, 25 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level in reading/literature, compared to 27 percent in 2021-22. This percentage varied by grade level with grade 11 having the greatest percentage of students (35 percent) scoring proficient or advanced and grade 4 having the smallest percentage of students (21 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

During the 2022-23 school year, 20,163 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in grade levels eligible to take the math PSSA (grades 3-8), the Algebra I Keystone Exam (grade 11), or the math PASA (grades 3, 8, or 11), of which 14,695 students (73 percent) had PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results. Figure 14 shows student results in math/Algebra I by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Figure 14. Overall, 13 percent of children and youth experiencing homelessness scored at a proficient or advanced level in Math or Algebra, a 2 percent increase compared to the previous year.

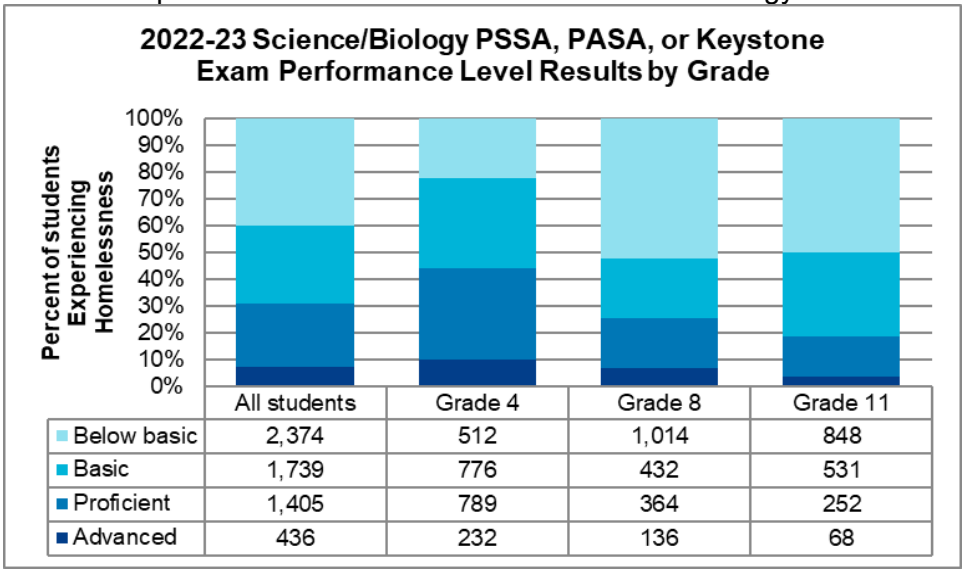


	All students	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
Below basic	9,091	1,335	1,293	1,316	1,412	1,445	1,545	745
Basic	3,750	615	648	612	483	388	318	686
Proficient	1,462	341	286	270	170	143	89	163
Advanced	392	90	80	78	52	40	19	33

Overall, 13 percent of students assessed scored in the proficient or advanced level, compared to 11 percent in 2021-22. This percentage varied by grade level, with grade 3 having the greatest percentage of students (18 percent) scoring in the proficient or advanced level and grade 8 having the smallest percentage of students (5 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

During the 2022-23 school year, 8,509 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in a grade level eligible to take the science PSSA (grades 4 and 8), the science PASA (grades 4, 8, and 11), or the biology Keystone Exam (grade 11), of which 5,954 students (70 percent) had results available. Figure 15 shows student results in science/biology by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Figure 15. Similar to last year, 31 percent of children and youth experiencing homelessness scored at a proficient or advanced level in Science or Biology.



	All students	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
Below basic	2,374	512	1,014	848
Basic	1,739	776	432	531
Proficient	1,405	789	364	252
Advanced	436	232	136	68

Overall, 31 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level, compared to 30 percent in 2021-22. This percentage varied by grade level, with grade 4 having the largest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (44 percent) and grade 11 having the smallest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (19 percent).

Overall, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness taking the state assessments is lower than the state's designated criteria of 95 percent. The nature of homelessness itself, coupled with mobility and transportation issues and their effects on attendance, is the most likely factor that contributes to not attaining the PSSA participation criteria.

Furthermore, students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania typically score far below their peers and about 10 percentage points lower than the historically underperforming population[36] in all grades and content areas. This has been a consistent pattern each year.

School Attendance

Student absence is defined as: "a student was absent if he or she was not physically on school grounds and was not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for at least half the school day."[37]

Chronic absenteeism for *EDFacts* reporting is defined as: "the unduplicated count[38] of students absent 10 percent or more of school days during the year." Students (K-12) should be counted in the chronic absenteeism data once they have been enrolled in a school for a minimum of 10 school days.

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[36] ***Historically Underperforming Students*** are defined as a non-duplicated count of ***students*** with disabilities, economically disadvantaged ***students***, and English Learners enrolled for a full academic year taking the PSSA/PASA/Keystone Exams.

[37] FS195-Chronic Absenteeism File Specifications v16.0

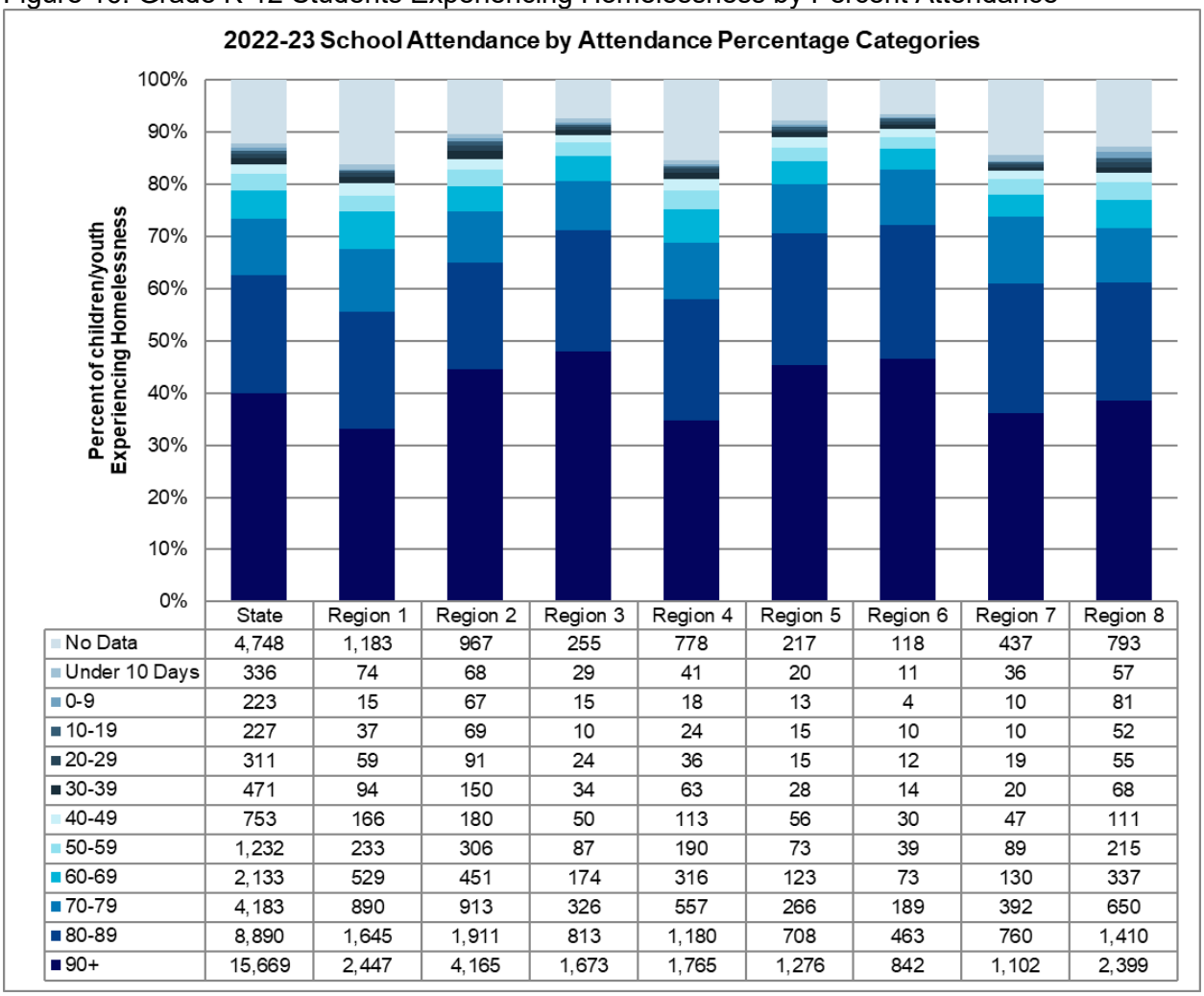
[38] Students should be counted once at each school he/she attends. For example, a student is enrolled in school A for half the school year and school B for the other half of the school year. This student should be counted at both school A and B.

Attendance data for all students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 was analyzed by examining student total days attended across all schools so that each student had one complete record for the academic calendar as opposed to each school attended. This provides a more accurate picture of a student's school attendance in a given year than within each school attendance and takes into consideration attendance gaps between school enrollments.

Of the 39,176 identified enrolled K-12 students, 87 percent (34,092) of students had school attendance data, 12 percent (4,748) did not have attendance data, and 1 percent (336) were not enrolled in an LEA for 10 or more days.

Of the 34,092 students with data, 46 percent (15,669) attended school 90 percent or more of the days in which they were enrolled, 26 percent (8,890) attended 80-89 percent of days enrolled, and 12 percent (4,183) attended 70-79 percent of days enrolled. The remaining 16 percent of students (5,350) attended 69 percent or less of the days in which they were enrolled. Based on these data, 54 percent of students would be considered chronically absent, compared to the 58 percent in 2021-22. Figure 16 shows school attendance by the attendance percentage categories.

Figure 16. Grade K-12 Students Experiencing Homelessness by Percent Attendance



	State	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
No Data	4,748	1,183	967	255	778	217	118	437	793
Under 10 Days	336	74	68	29	41	20	11	36	57
0-9	223	15	67	15	18	13	4	10	81
10-19	227	37	69	10	24	15	10	10	52
20-29	311	59	91	24	36	15	12	19	55
30-39	471	94	150	34	63	28	14	20	68
40-49	753	166	180	50	113	56	30	47	111
50-59	1,232	233	306	87	190	73	39	89	215
60-69	2,133	529	451	174	316	123	73	130	337
70-79	4,183	890	913	326	557	266	189	392	650
80-89	8,890	1,645	1,911	813	1,180	708	463	760	1,410
90+	15,669	2,447	4,165	1,673	1,765	1,276	842	1,102	2,399

Graduation and Dropout

McKinney-Vento Act recipients are a subgroup for graduation and dropout in federal reporting (*EDFacts*) and as such all available graduation and dropout data were analyzed. Dropout data was examined for students in grades 7-12 and graduation data was examined for grade 12 students and grade 11 students who graduated.

There were 18,430 students identified as experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grades 7-12, of which 3.9 percent dropped out of school, compared to the 3.8 percent in 2021-22. State dropout data for 2021-22, the most current available for comparison, showed a dropout rate of 1.68 percent. [39]

Grade 12 had the highest percentage of students dropping out at 7.1 percent (235 of 3,312 students); grade 11 had the next highest rate at 6.6 percent (177 of 2,698 students); and grades 9 and 10 had a rate of 4.0 percent each (150 of 3,709 students and 126 of 3,133 students, respectively).

In terms of graduation, there were 3,312 grade 12 students, of which 2,995 (90 percent) had graduation status information. Of these 2,995 whose status was known, 2,243 graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma (74.9 percent), 235 dropped out (7.8 percent), and 517 (17.3 percent) did not graduate. For comparison, the graduation rate for those experiencing homelessness was 72.7 percent in 2021-22. Also of note, 68 students designated as being in grade 11 either graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

ARP-HCY Implementation Survey

Of the 712 eligible McKinney-Vento (MV) subgrantees, 86 percent ultimately participated in ARP-HCY funding. Table 6 indicates the breakdown of funding provided, with a total of 400 LEAs accepting direct ARP-HCY II funds and 193 LEAs being part of a region-specific consortium-level ARP-HCY II funding groups. [40] Eight LEAs, specifically Intermediate Units, were assigned as the regional consortium leads to oversee the disbursement of funds for the LEAs in their region's consortium. The remaining 119 LEAs did not to participate in either direct funding or their region's consortium for the ARP-HCY II funding. [41]

[39] https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Dropouts/Pages/default.aspx
[40] Two LEAs were absorbed into a district, decreasing the total count receiving direct ARP-HCY II funds from 402 in 2021-22, and three additional LEAs closed, resulting in the reduction of the total consortium count from 196 in 2021-22.
[41] Three new LEAs opened in, and one LEA closed prior to SY 2022-23, adjusting the total count from 117 in 2021-22.

Table 6. ARP-HCY LEA Counts by Region

Region	Individually Funded LEAs	Consortium Funded LEAs	Non-Funded LEAs
1	38	22	26
2	65	21	9
3	35	16	5
4	74	50	31
5	46	17	10
6	38	14	13
7	54	23	12
8	50	30	13
Total	**400**	**193**	**119**

LEAs completed an Implementation Survey to gain a better understanding about how they used ARP-HCY II funding to serve homeless students in the 2022-23 program year. The survey was administered to LEAs in May 2023. Findings indicate that 344 of the 400 (86 percent) LEA ARP-HCY II funded agencies responded, including 336 school districts, charter/cyber charter schools, and all eight regional consortiums (who represent the 193 LEAs contained within). This response level represents a large portion (95 percent) of the ARP-HCY II dollar allocation. As such, it is believed that this collection of responses provides an accurate level of representation of the overall intent of usage.

The top three needs addressed by LEAs using ARP-HCY II funds were transportation (76 percent), supplies (59 percent), and attendance (29 percent).

To increase identification, enrollment, retention or educational success of their children and youth experiencing homelessness, LEAs used ARP-HYC II funds to provide transportation to children and youth so they can attend classes and participate fully in school activities (80 percent), purchase needed supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items) (67 percent), and/or to purchase stores cards or prepaid debt cards to buy materials necessary for student participation in school activities (38 percent).

Of the 340 LEAs and consortiums who responded, 253 (74 percent) indicated that they have summer school programming for the following age-grade levels: prekindergarten (13 percent), kindergarten to fifth grade (93 percent), sixth to eighth grade (79 percent), and ninth to twelfth grade (67 percent). It was also found that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the LEAs who provide summer programming do so for at least three of these groupings. Summer programming occurred in June (66 percent), July (89 percent), and August (29 percent), with two-thirds (66 percent) of the responding LEAs indicating that they offered it in at least two of the three summer months. Summer programs focused on reading/literacy (94 percent) and/or math (92 percent), and nearly half (47 percent) of the programs also had STEM/STEAM components. The programs mostly included in-person interactions (77 percent) or a combination of in-person and virtual interactions (16 percent), and ARP funds were utilized in support, specifically ESSER/ARP funding (57 percent) and ARP-HCY II funding (13 percent), while 29 percent of those with a summer program used LEA general funds.

LEAs also indicated how they used ARP-HCY II funds for additional professional development or technical assistance to serve children and youth experiencing homelessness. The top four areas were mental health support (24 percent), attendance (22 percent), transportation (21 percent), and fiscal management of ARP-HCY II funds (20 percent); once again, highlighting the

importance of issues related to transportation and attendance for those children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The Pennsylvania regional model to implement the McKinney-Vento Act provides an opportunity for every child or youth identified as experiencing homelessness to access needed resources or services, especially related to school enrollment, including prekindergarten, and academic success.

Regional coordinators and their staff train, troubleshoot, intervene, and collaborate on behalf of children and youth and their families, the schools they attend, or the shelters in which they reside. The nature of their work and the differences among the regions create unique challenges for each region to address. There are differences in geographic territory and urban-centric locale of communities and schools in their region. There are differences in the numbers of LEAs (including the growing number of charter and cyber charter schools), shelters, prekindergarten programs, and kinds of organizations that provide services to children, youth, or families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, there are differences in the numbers and roles of ECYEH Program staffers within the regions. These challenges and differences contribute to the recommendations that follow.

Each year, LEA identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness becomes more complete and accurate, and there is a positive trend in reporting by LEAs overall, for non-enrolled younger siblings of enrolled students, for children enrolled in LEA prekindergarten programs, and by non-LEA entities, especially through HMIS reporting. This represents a laudable commitment on the part of the ECYEH Program.

As a result of the coordinators' outreach and ongoing collaboration work, 46,714 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2022-23. This is an increase from 40,003 identified children and youth in 2021-22. The number of enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness also increased from 34,043 in 2021-22 to 40,122 in 2022-23. An increased focus on identification and enrollment beginning in 2021-22 because of ARP-HCY I funds may also be contributing to the increase in identified children and youth.

Despite the ECYEH Program's increased focus on supporting children younger than age five in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in prekindergarten programs, there is a disconnect between prekindergarten program reporting and the McKinney-Vento Act reporting criteria. Few LEAs operate or fund prekindergarten programs, and non-LEA prekindergarten programs are only required to report if they receive direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program. ECYEH staff, while charged with reaching out to all prekindergarten programs, many of which are non-LEA, also have a primary priority to support LEAs and their liaisons. This provides an incomplete picture of homelessness for children not yet enrolled in a LEA.

There are several trends that remain consistent for this program and its population:

1. Regional staff provide a wealth of training, technical assistance, and coordination of services to LEAs and entities that serve children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.
2. Most children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness (89 percent for 2022-23) receive individual support or services.
3. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are predominately economically disadvantaged and attend LEAs that have high levels of poverty.
4. Statewide, transportation remains one of the most common barriers.

5. Most students remain in their LEA/school of origin.
6. Despite some consistency for a large portion of children and youth, there are students who experience extreme mobility or experience barriers to enrollment.
7. Homeless counts vary considerably across state regions.
8. Although ECYEH Program is focusing more on the under-five population, prekindergarten identification protocols and McKinney-Vento Act reporting guidance do not align.
9. Regional staff have expanded their responsibilities to meet the needs of an increasing number of children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness and an increasing list of collaborating entities.
10. Only 24 LEAs (historical low) reported zero identified children and youth experiencing homelessness. Many of these LEAs were small, served a subset of the total K-12 population, enrolled few students from low-income families, or had a combination of these conditions. Since 2016-17 the total number of LEAs with no students identified decreased by over half (69 to 24).
11. Slightly more than half (54 percent) of students experiencing homelessness exhibit chronic absenteeism, an improvement over the 58 percent in 2021-22. Chronic absenteeism most likely directly contributes to lower outcomes on Pennsylvania academic assessments, on-time graduation, and high dropout rates, especially in grades 10-12. Identifying and addressing chronic absenteeism needs to be a priority for the state office as well as the individual LEAs.
12. Overall, the percentage of students experiencing homelessness taking the state assessments is lower than the state's designated criteria of 95 percent. Further, students experiencing homelessness in Pennsylvania typically score far below their peers and about 10 percentage points lower than the historically underperforming population in all grades and content areas.

Based on data results, the following points are recommended to optimize program implementation at the regional and local levels:

1. Regional staff continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by, or with, other entities that work with or support homelessness to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program.
2. State and regional ECYEH staff continue to explore creative transportation options to support LEAs with common barriers.
3. Regional staff continue to work with local Continuum of Care contemporaries to ensure that HMIS reporting continues for all 57 counties.
4. Regional staff continue to explore options for instructional support to students outside of the standard LEA instructional period, including but not limited to, afterschool/summer programs or students residing in shelters.
5. Regional staff consider professional development or technical assistance to LEAs related to examining prekindergarten programming options for younger siblings of enrolled students; students' school attendance, dropout, and graduation rates; and participation in academic support activities. LEAs with excessive missing data, high chronic absenteeism, low graduation rates, high dropout rates, or poor assessment outcomes for their students experiencing homelessness would be of primary focus.
6. Continue to build collaborations with prekindergarten partners at the state and regional levels and ensure that all LEAs know the prekindergarten programs in their area and have the capacity to make referrals when they enroll students who have under-five

siblings not enrolled in prekindergarten programs. Connections between shelters and prekindergarten programs may need to be established or strengthened.

7. Regional staff continue to reach out to non-reporting LEAs, with a bigger emphasis on charter schools, to ensure that they understand their McKinney-Vento Act obligations, understand how their reporting contributes to the ECYEH ecosystem, and have protocols in place to identify and report eligible children and youth experiencing homelessness.
8. Regional Staff continue to emphasize the importance of ensuring that students experiencing homelessness participate in state standardized testing and connect students to services and support that can help them better prepare for standardized tests.
9. Due to the increase in reporting of children and youth experiencing homelessness, additional outreach to non-LEA entities, and LEA monitoring preparation and follow-up, a review of ECYEH staff duties may be warranted ensure the most time-effective delivery methods for training, technical assistance, and outreach.
10. State staff examine prekindergarten identification protocols to see if there is a way to align them with McKinney Vento Act reporting guidance.
11. Regional and LEA staff continue to use the LEA Data Profile to evaluate trends to inform how they identify and serve children and youth experiencing homelessness.
12. Continue to improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by or with other entities that work on or support homeless populations to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program. Utilize state technical assistance to monitor and assure that regions are accurately reporting the services they provide.

The evaluation of the ECYEH Program is intended to provide a statewide and regional picture of program implementation, outcomes, and impacts. These findings, along with detailed information at the county, LEA, or school level, when appropriate, are provided to the regional coordinators and PDE program staff to assist with internal program implementation, improvement, and decision making. Additionally, regions received individual child and youth information from the data collection process. Results are based upon the data available.