

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2021-22 State Evaluation Report

May 2023



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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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, 2021, and June 30, 2022 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

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.

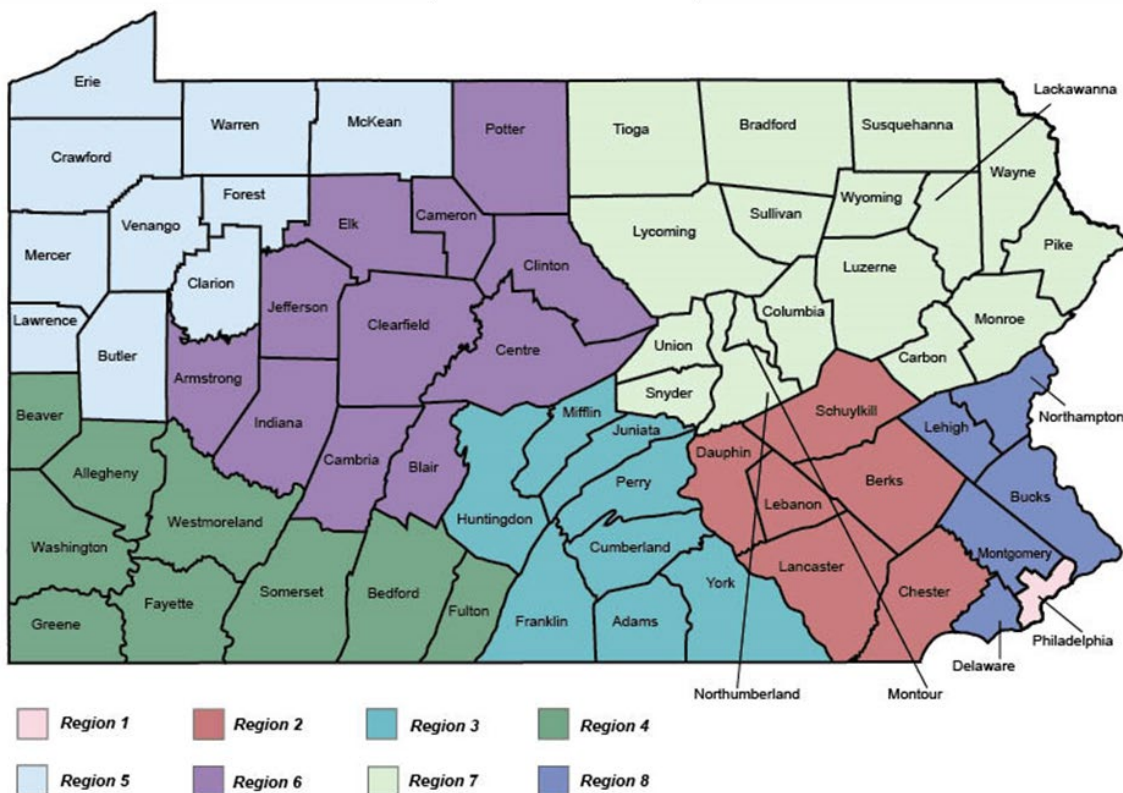
The main objectives of Pennsylvania's ECYEH Program are to:

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



The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in the United States in March 2020, continued to influence the implementation of the ECYEH program for the 2020-21 program year. In-person events and services, including academic programs, were postponed, canceled, or adapted to remote implementation to reduce the spread of the disease. During the disruption, the ECYEH Program transformed operations to achieve the same goals and objectives listed above.

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 2021-22 program evaluation was the 12th 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

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.

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.

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 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 PAsecureID⁵ 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

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.

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.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (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 one-time 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 were 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 Center for Schools and Communities, the state technical assistance team, to enhance their professional development to regions and LEAs. Part of this funding stream was used to develop a statewide mobile app for families and youth experiencing homelessness. Details of Center for Schools and Communities activities are highlighted in the Statewide Technical Assistance section of this report.
3. The Allegheny Intermediate Unit 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. 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 intended use of ARP-HCYII funds at the LEA and regional consortium levels. This survey will be conducted annually. Findings from this 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 2021-22 program year.

The state evaluation of the ECYEH Program for 2021-22 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 Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (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 the Pennsylvania Department of Education, specifically Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program, Division of Student Services.

Executive Summary

The 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 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).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in the United States in March 2020, continued to have a considerable influence on the implementation of the ECYEH program for the 2021-22 program year. Therefore, to achieve program goals and objectives, the ECYEH program continued to adjust operations and processes as the pandemic waned. In many cases, however, in-person events were restored, while some remote-level interactions were also maintained to promote efficiencies within the program.

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

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, was evaluated.

Approximately 19,427 individuals⁶ from 748 unique entities participated in ECYEH-provided trainings, professional development, or workshops in 2021-22.; 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 768 entities⁷ receiving technical assistance:

1. 69 percent (531) were LEAs; 7 percent (52) were shelters; 21 percent (162) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and 3 percent (23) were prekindergarten programs; and
2. 97 percent (742) received child-specific technical assistance; 75 percent (579) received non-child specific technical assistance; 73 percent (557) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials; and 58 percent (449) 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, or food pantries. In 2021-22, ECYEH staff participated in 406 unique events. These events occurred annually (43 events), monthly (164 events), quarterly (153 events), or bi-monthly (45 events). Typically, ECYEH staff members attended events as regular attendees; however, in 105 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 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 2021-22 academic year, there were 499 school districts,¹⁰ 179 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 10 school districts and 17 charter or cyber charter schools for which no students meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness were reported. Of these 27 LEAs, one school district and eight charter or cyber charter schools 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.

As a result of outreach and ongoing collaboration work, 40,003 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2021-22. This is an increase from 32,666 and 37,930 identified children and youth in 2020-21 and 2019-20, respectively, and historically is the highest reported attributed count. It is likely that the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this increase, as physical school buildings and many provider spaces, including shelters, re-opened in 2021-22. An increased focus on identification and enrollment in 2021-22 because of ARP-HCY I funds may also be contributing to the increase in identified children and youth.

The number of students enrolled in school identified as experiencing homelessness also increased from 27,235 in 2020-21 to 34,043 in 2021-22. Students experiencing homelessness comprised 2.0 percent of the total Pennsylvania public school population during the 2021-22 school year. This was an increase from the prior year's 1.6 percent, highlighting the increased difficulty in identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness during the remote learning response to the pandemic in the 2020-21 school year. For comparison, the rate was 1.9 percent in 2019-20. The 2020-21 national percentage of the enrolled population experiencing homelessness was 2.21 percent.¹¹

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.brynthynschooldistrict.org/>.

¹¹ National Center for Homeless Education - National Overview: <https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/ConsolidatedStateProfile.aspx>

Of the 34,043 children and youth enrolled in LEA prekindergarten through grade 12, 66 percent were doubled-up;¹² 21 percent were in shelters or transitional housing; 12 percent were in 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.

Key findings about the 40,003 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness include the following.

1. 11 percent were also identified as unaccompanied youth.¹³
2. 65 percent were classified as economically disadvantaged, though it is likely that many of those with unknown¹⁴ status (25 percent) may have been economically disadvantaged as well.
3. 32 percent were Black or African American; 30 percent were White; 23 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 7 percent.
4. 10 percent were identified as English learners.
5. 3 percent were identified as migrant per Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program.
6. 25 percent were identified as having a disability, with 36 percent of those identified categorized as having a "specific learning disability."
7. Shelter data was collected from all counties.
8. 94 non-LEA entities reported 7,995 (20 percent) children and youth, 4,585 of which were birth to age 2, ages 3 to 5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten), or attending non-LEA prekindergarten programs.

Of the 34,043 enrolled students experiencing homelessness, 68 percent attended LEAs categorized as city or suburb and 70 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 10 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, 17 percent of enrolled students had one or more barriers to enrollment, attendance, and/or academic success. The most common barrier was

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.

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.

determining if a student was eligible for homeless services, followed by transportation. Transportation issues remain high especially in light of LEA financial constraints or logistical challenges in arranging transportation. As such, transportation is 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 will be used to target potential long-term solutions for processes that address logistical challenges that currently exist with transportation.

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 34,043 enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness, LEA/school mobility¹⁵ could be determined for 90 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, 80 percent of the 40,003 identified children and youth received services at the individual level. Tutoring or other instructional support was, by far, the most prevalent service received.

State academic assessment data for 2021-22 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 72 percent of students experiencing homelessness in grades where the assessments are given. Overall, 27 percent scored in the proficient or advanced level in reading/literature, 11 percent scored proficient or advanced in math/Algebra I, and 30 percent of students scored proficient or advanced in science/biology.

School attendance data was available for 84 percent of enrolled students, of which 42 percent of students attended 90 percent or more of the days enrolled.

Of the 15,479 students enrolled in grades 7-12, 3.8 percent dropped out of school, with grade 12 having the highest dropout percentage at 7.3 percent, followed by grade 11 at 6.6 percent, and grade 10 at 3.8 percent.

Of 2,737 grade 12 students for whom graduation status was known, 72.7 percent graduated. Additionally, 37 grade 11 students (1.9 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, several 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.

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.

2. Most children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness (80 percent for 2021-22) 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. Transportation remains one of the two most common barriers statewide.
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. The ECYEH Program is focusing more on the under-five population, yet prekindergarten identification protocols and McKinney-Vento Act reporting guidance does not align.
9. Regional staff have expanded 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 27 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.

Considering these themes, it is recommended that:

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.
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.
6. 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.

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 was 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 2021-22, some regional offices began using their ARP-HCY I funding to support and expand professional development and technical assistance ECYEH funded activities highlighted below. It is anticipated that these activities will be able to be addressed in more detail in 2022-23.

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.

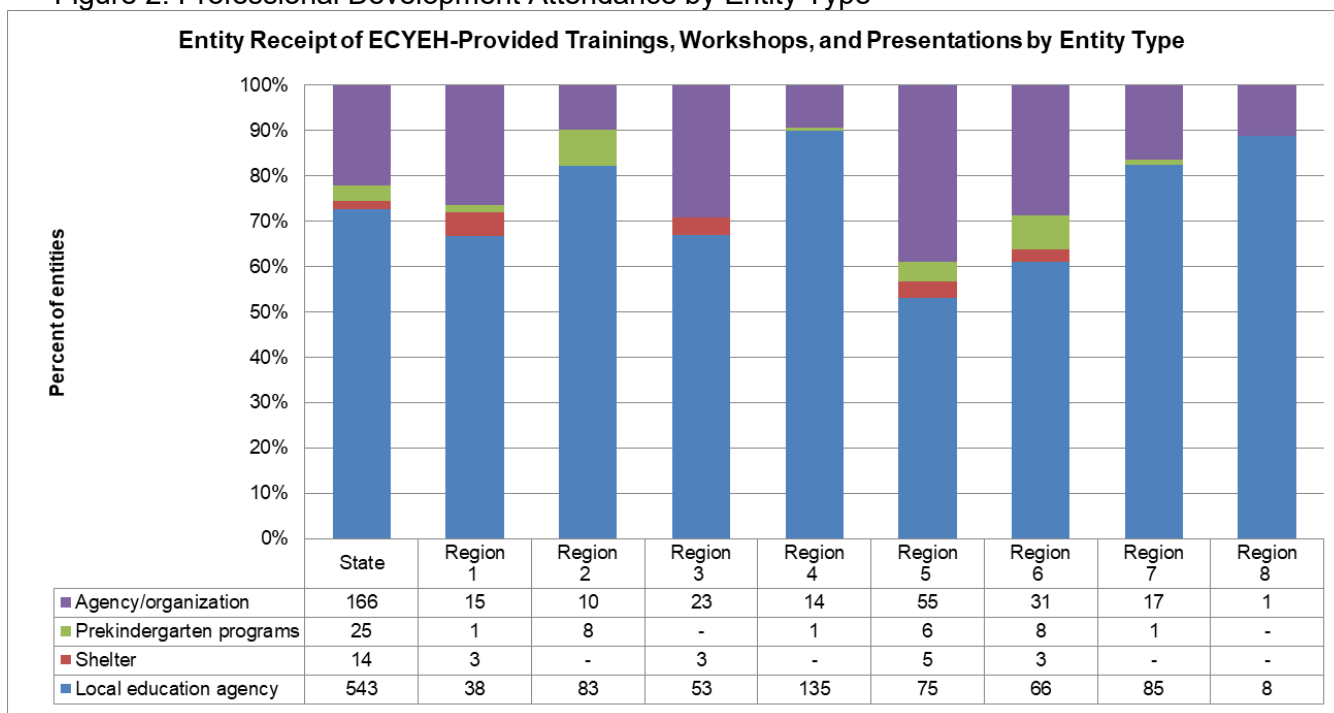
Professional development was provided at the regional, county, LEA, entity, or individual level. Likewise, the same event could have occurred at multiple levels. Liaison training was also provided throughout the year as staff turnover occurred. To mediate the variations in the number of events offered, 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 2021-22 program year, 748 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. Professional Development Attendance by Entity Type



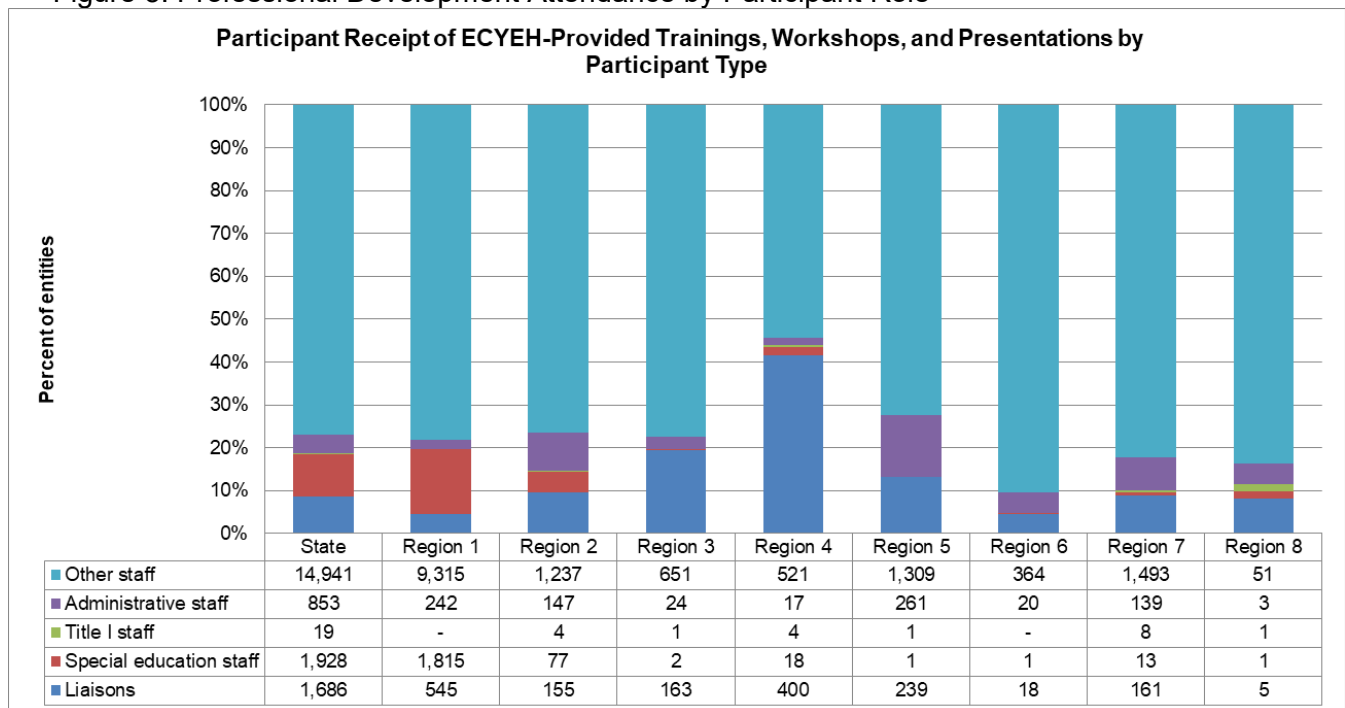
Professional development was also tracked by participant role. Overall, 19,427¹⁶ individuals representing various roles participated in ECYEH trainings or events (see Figure 3). This count is substantially higher than the 8,666 in 2020-21 which is primarily due to a mandatory professional development for all Philadelphia school district (SD) staff members.

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 separately designated liaison in each of their buildings. Building-level liaisons work in collaboration with the required LEA-wide liaison. As such, liaison counts may look inflated. 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 2021-22, 1,686 liaisons (duplicate count) were reported as attending one or more trainings held by ECYEH staff, and 53 liaisons were reported as participating in a session that focused on LEA monitoring preparation and/or follow-up.

Figure 3. Professional Development Attendance by Participant Role



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.

A particular entity may have 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 768 unique LEAs, shelters, prekindergarten programs, and groups, agencies, or organizations as receiving support through one or more of the technical assistance categories. Of these 768 entities, 69 percent (531) were

LEAs; 7 percent (52) were shelters; 21 percent (162) were groups, agencies, or organizations; and three percent (23) were non-LEA prekindergarten programs.

Of the 531 LEAs that received technical assistance:

- 508 LEAs (96 percent) received child-specific technical assistance. Technical assistance frequency was captured as once, occasionally, or often. Of these LEAs, 145 reported receiving this type of technical assistance 'often,' 342 as 'occasionally,' and 21 as 'once.'
- 397 LEAs (75 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 143 LEAs received this type of technical assistance 'often,' 237 received 'occasionally,' and 17 received 'once.'
- 379 LEAs (71 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 310 LEAs (58 percent) received bulk supplies such backpacks, school supplies, bus passes, clothing, toiletries, or blankets.

Of the 52 shelter, emergency, or transitional housing facilities that received technical assistance:

- 52 facilities (100 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 13 received 'often' and 39 received 'occasionally.'
- 33 facilities (63 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 26 received 'often' and seven facilities received 'occasionally.'
- 34 facilities (65 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act related materials.
- 35 facilities (67 percent) received bulk supplies.

Of the 162 agencies, organizations, or groups that received technical assistance:

- 159 entities (98 percent) received child-specific technical assistance, of which 16 received 'often,' and 143 received 'occasionally.'
- 128 entities (79 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance, of which 64 received 'often' and 64 entities received 'occasionally.'
- 123 entities (76 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 92 entities (57 percent) received bulk supplies.

Of the 23 non-LEA prekindergarten programs that received technical assistance support:

- 23 entities (100 percent) received child-specific technical assistance. All 23 received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 21 entities (91 percent) received child non-specific technical assistance. All 21 received this type of technical assistance 'occasionally.'
- 21 entities (91 percent) received McKinney-Vento Act-related materials.
- 12 entity (52 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 2021-22, ECYEH staff reported participating in 406 unique events. These events occurred annually (43 events), monthly (164 events), quarterly (153 events), or bi-monthly (45 events).

Typically, ECTEH staff members attended events as regular attendees; however, in 105 instances, staff held a leader/facilitator role in the event. Event attendees ranged from two to 1,000 people, with 71 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.

ECTEH Program outreach through training, technical assistance, or collaboration not only spread the word about the McKinney-Vento Act and the ECTEH 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 ECTEH 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

In 2021-22 the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECTEH) and American Rescue Plan- Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) program staff provided two regional technical assistance visits – one during the fall 2021 and one in spring 2022 – to provide general support, guidance, and recommendations to each of the eight regional offices. Technical assistance visits were conducted virtually and in-person. The PDE ECTEH State Coordinator also monitored each region to ensure program compliance in accordance with federal and state guidelines and implementation of all regional contracts. Findings from these visits contributed to statewide best practices, recommendations, and technical assistance for larger meetings, statewide and regional training content, and for identification of topics and presenters for the statewide conference.

ECTEH and ARP-HCY technical assistance staff also coordinated and facilitated state-level professional development activities, often in collaboration with regional coordinators or other state personnel throughout the program year. These activities supported regional coordinators and homeless liaisons, and provided additional outreach and information to other programming and services that work with children, youth and families experiencing homelessness.

Statewide ECTEH activities for the 2021-22 program year included:

1. Support, participation, and dissemination of the following resources, updates, webinars, and trainings:
 - a. Attended the STARR Commonwealth Trauma and Resilience Virtual Conference.
 - b. Co-presented at the Center for Safe Schools' Third Thursday virtual webinar, "Let's Talk About Young People Harnessing Healthy Relationships".
 - c. Co-presented a 2-hour webinar training, "Five Foundational Factors to Building Resilience," as part of a trauma-skill schools certification process with the National Dropout Prevention Center.
 - d. Participated in the PA Early Childhood Education Homelessness quarterly stakeholders' meetings.
 - e. Attended the "Latest Federal Policy Developments: Child, Youth, and Family Homelessness" webinar with SchoolHouse Connection.

- f. Co-coordinated outreach and marketing for and attended the two-part PA ECYEH and LEA Liaisons Early Childhood Community of Practice training in collaboration with The PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the PA Head Start State Collaboration Office.
 - g. Regularly approved and provided updates to the ECYEH Homeless Liaison Directory with new liaison contact information as requested by regional offices.
2. Coordination and implementation of the October 2021 virtual “Paving the Way to Educational Success Conference” with over 800 individuals registered from across Pennsylvania and beyond. The conference convened over three days so participants could learn, discuss, practice key concepts, and collaborate with others to “pave the way” for children and youth experiencing homelessness and children and youth in foster care. Presenters represented 17 states and the District of Columbia with 2 keynote presenters and an expert panel with national representation including the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, American Youth Policy Forum, and the University of Pennsylvania. New for the conference in 2021 were three Social-emotional learning based “Reflect and Refresh” sessions to open and close conference activities. Other sessions included five foundational “Paving the Way” Institutes, twelve 45-minute “Skill Builder” sessions, six 30-minute “Briefing” sessions, thirteen 1-hour 15-minute workshops, two networking opportunities with regional and state partners, and the annual “Advocates of the Year” awards ceremony.
 3. Attendance at ECYEH Awareness Week events including the virtual event “I Will Be Your Voice, Stories of Homelessness and Hope” and the Capitol proclamation organized by ECYEH regional teams.
 4. Coordination and facilitation of a virtual 5-part “Spring Speaker Series” for homeless liaisons, regional office staff, additional youth-serving personnel, and community programs. Topics and presenters included:
 - a. “Reimagining Learning through Integrating Self-Care,” Anne Contreras, Pure Edge, Inc.
 - b. “Let’s Get Integrated! The Power of Mindful Communication,” Sarah Colantonio, Work Wisdom.
 - c. “Serving Ourselves and Each Other—Compassion and Adult Social and Emotional Learning with Project Wayfinder,” Tristan Love and Katie Barr, Project Wayfinder.
 - d. “Making Engagement Easy: The Five Essential Ingredients” with Chad Littlefield.
 - e. “How to Humanize: The Questions You Should Be Asking Before You Tell Other People’s Stories” with author Jessica Goudeau.
 5. Monitoring preparation, orientation training, and additional monitor support throughout the monitoring cycle along with processing all finalized reports throughout the 2021-22 program year.

ARP-HCY funds were also released during the 2021-2022 program year. Strategic planning, roll out of deliverables, and trainings during this program year included:

1. Hiring an ARP-HCY Youth Development Coordinator to coordinate and support all ARP-HCY CSC statewide initiatives.

2. Coordinating, developing, and presenting the two-part “ARP-HCY II Orientation” training to over 400 LEAs. The training included an overview of the PA ECYEH Program, McKinney-Vento 101, and information about ARP-HCY I & II. This orientation prepared LEAs for submitting their ARP-HCY applications.
3. Developing a statewide mobile app for families and youth experiencing homelessness. Early stages of the project included:
 - a. system and content development in collaboration with Shelter, Inc. app developers from Colorado and Texas;
 - b. beta testing roll-out phase of the mobile app with specific focus groups and the Regional Offices to obtain feedback on next steps and needs during the development phase;
 - c. training for PDE staff, CSC staff, and Regional Offices on how to manage the mobile app from the administration level; and
 - d. developing a strategic outreach and awareness campaign, including development of new outreach materials and toolkit, for public launch of the app.
4. Developing an ARP-HCY website to act as the hub for resources, training, and content pertaining to the usages of ARP-HCY funds and activities.
5. Coordinating a monthly virtual Restorative Practice Series for youth, families, and educators with instructor Dr. Rajni Shankar-Brown. The series, titled “Replenish and Keep Growing!”, focused on equity and healing-centered practices to counter the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. Dr. Rajni Shankar-Brown is a professor at Stetson University, FL, and President of the National Coalition for the Homeless.
6. Coordinating two week-long virtual summer camps for middle and high school students that served approximately 100 students across grade levels. Using the theme “Build Your Best School Year” to prepare students experiencing homelessness for the upcoming school year, the virtual summer camp offered academic enrichment through a variety of topics.
7. Providing support to PDE throughout the ARP-HCY application processes including:
 - a. ARP-HCY I (review and development of CSC-focused application in collaboration with PDE and review of Regional Offices’ applications and usage of funds).
 - b. ARP-HCY II applications (review and approval of LEA applications and review of Regional Offices’ applications and usage of funds).
 - c. ARP-HCY Consortium (review of Regional Offices’ consortium applications and plan and development of CSC-managed Region 1 consortium plan).

ECYEH regional coordinators and their offices received consistent support, training and technical assistance throughout the year including regular email and phone contacts, bi-monthly regional meetings, and bi-annual all regional office meetings. Organized by the ECYEH and ARP-HCY program staff, these meetings gave regional coordinators and their support staff the opportunity to hear state updates, engage with each other, and to learn, discuss, and problem solve complicated situations across various needs in the state. These meetings were held virtually throughout the 2021-22 program year due to the remaining COVID 19 protocols.

ECYEH and ARP-HCY program staff also encouraged regional offices to virtually present workshop sessions and to assist with statewide conference workshop facilitation and networking opportunities. ECYEH program staff also attended the annual National Association for the

Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (NAEHCY) conference either in-person in Atlanta, Georgia or virtually to represent the PA State ECYEH Program and for their own professional development.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program outcomes 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 also 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 2021-22 academic year, there were 499 school districts,¹⁹ 179 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 10 school districts and 17 charter or cyber charter schools for which no students meeting the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness were reported. Of these 27 LEAs, one school district and eight 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.

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/>.

Further exploration of the LEAs with no identified students or reporting zero students²⁰ revealed that many of the LEAs were small (17 LEAs had fewer than 500 students), served a subset of the total K-12 population (18 LEAs), and/or enrolled few students from low-income families (14 LEAs).²¹ In fact, many (18 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 make it a priority to reach out 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.

In an effort 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 27). Additionally, there were 32 in 2019-20 (pre-COVID) and 37 in 2020-21 (mid-COVID), with the 27 LEAs reporting no students in 2021-22, indicating a return to the trend of declining non-reporters in the post-COVID period.

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 verified²². In the 2021-22 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 2021-22, 94 non-LEA entities²³ reported 7,995 children and youth (20 percent of identified children and youth) who could not be tied to an LEA. Many of the children and youth (4,585) reported by these facilities were birth to age 2, ages 3 to 5 (not enrolled in prekindergarten), or attending non-LEA prekindergarten programs. The reporting by non-LEA facilities increases with

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 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.

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 category. As a result of ESSA²⁴, the homeless definition that determines who is eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act shifted. As a result, 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 2021-22, 40,003 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness. This is an increase over the last two years (32,666 were identified in 2020-21 and 37,930 were identified in 2019-20). 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 has resumed in the 2021-22 program year, with 2021-22 indicating the highest reported attributed count historically. Additionally, the ECYEH program identified an increase in enrolled students experiencing homelessness: 27,235 in 2020-21 and 34,043 in 2021-22.

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, 2021, through June 30, 2022).

PDE reports for 2021-22 year showed a public school (school districts, charter/cyber charter schools, comprehensive technical centers) October 1 enrollment count of 1,687,176 students.²⁵ In 2021-22, 34,043 of the 40,003 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness were enrolled in school. Students experiencing homelessness made up 2.0 percent of the total public school enrolled population; an increase from the prior year's 1.6 percent. This data also highlights the challenge LEAs had with identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness during the remote learning response to the pandemic in the 2020-21 school year. For comparison, the rate was 1.9 percent in 2019-20. The 2020-21 national percentage of the enrolled population experiencing homelessness was 2.21 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.

²⁴ As of December 2016.

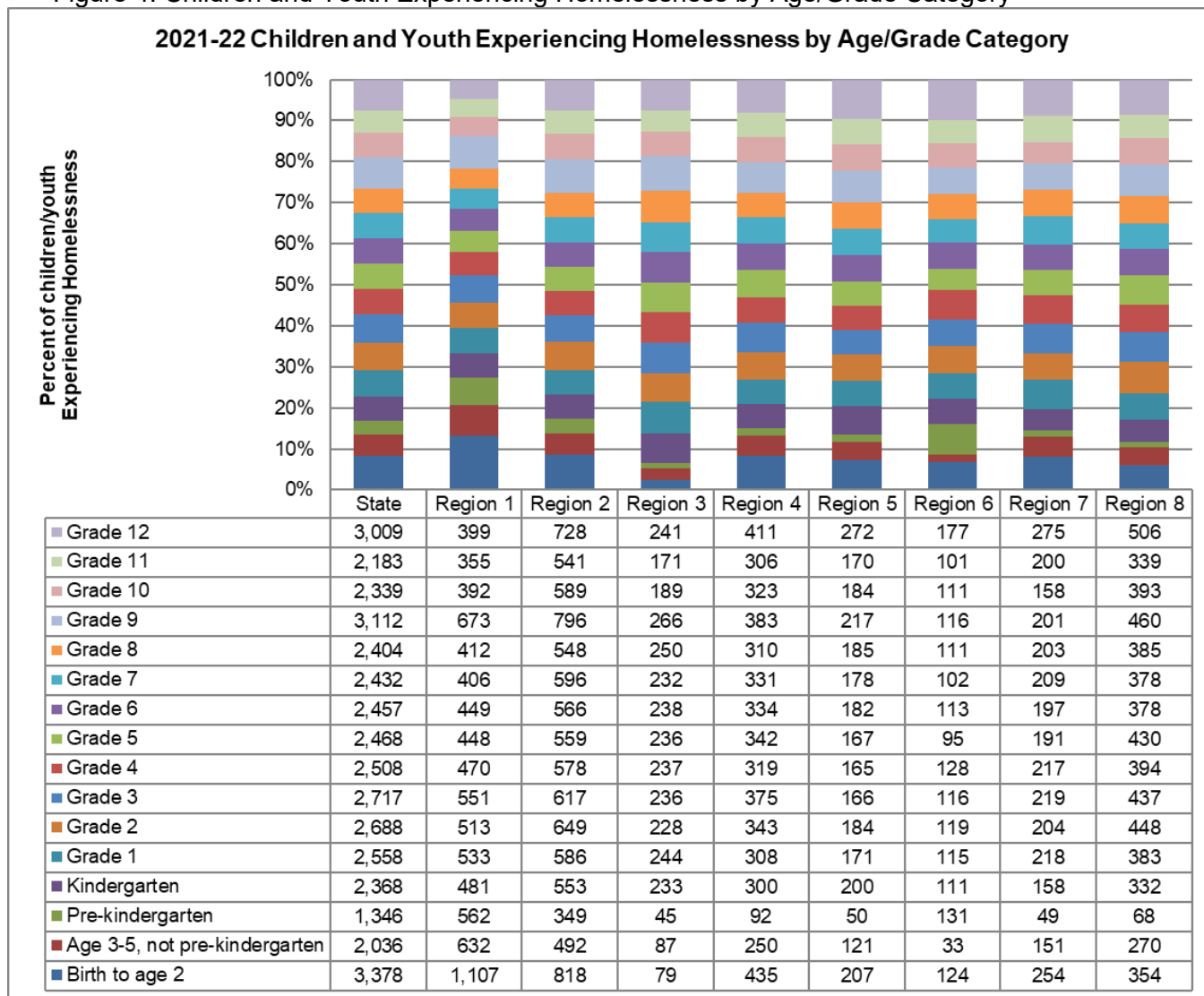
²⁵ <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment>

²⁶ National Center for Homeless Education - National Overview:
<https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/ConsolidatedStateProfile.aspx>

Figure 4 shows the age/grade breakdown of the 40,003 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.

The ECYEH Program continued to see an increase in reporting of children under five (not yet in kindergarten). 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



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.

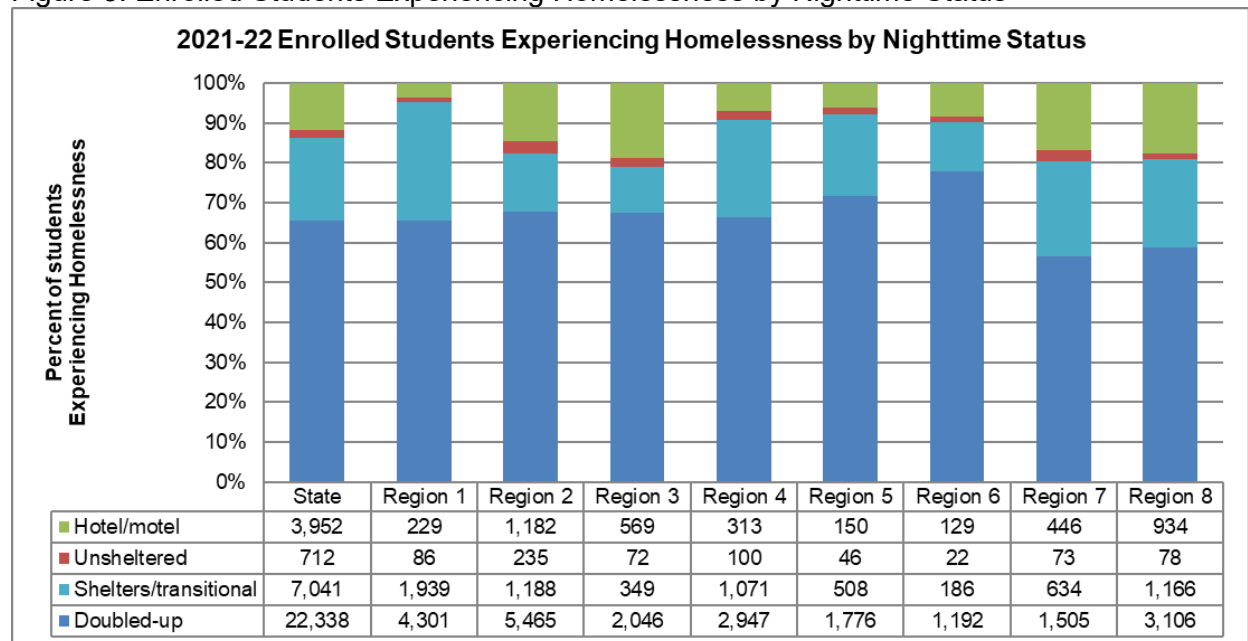
Nighttime status reporting categories include doubled-up, hotel or motel, shelter and transitional housing, and unsheltered. Per federal requirements, only the first nighttime status category is reported; however, children and youth may experience different nighttime statuses throughout the year.

Figure 5 shows the nighttime status for the 34,043 students who were enrolled in school, prekindergarten programs through grade 12.

Overall, 66 percent of students had a nighttime status of doubled-up and 21 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 4,301 students in 2021-22. Despite a sharp decline in the 2020-21 count due to the COVID pandemic, the total doubled-up population count in 2021-22 (4,301) exceeded 2019-20 (4,002), further 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.

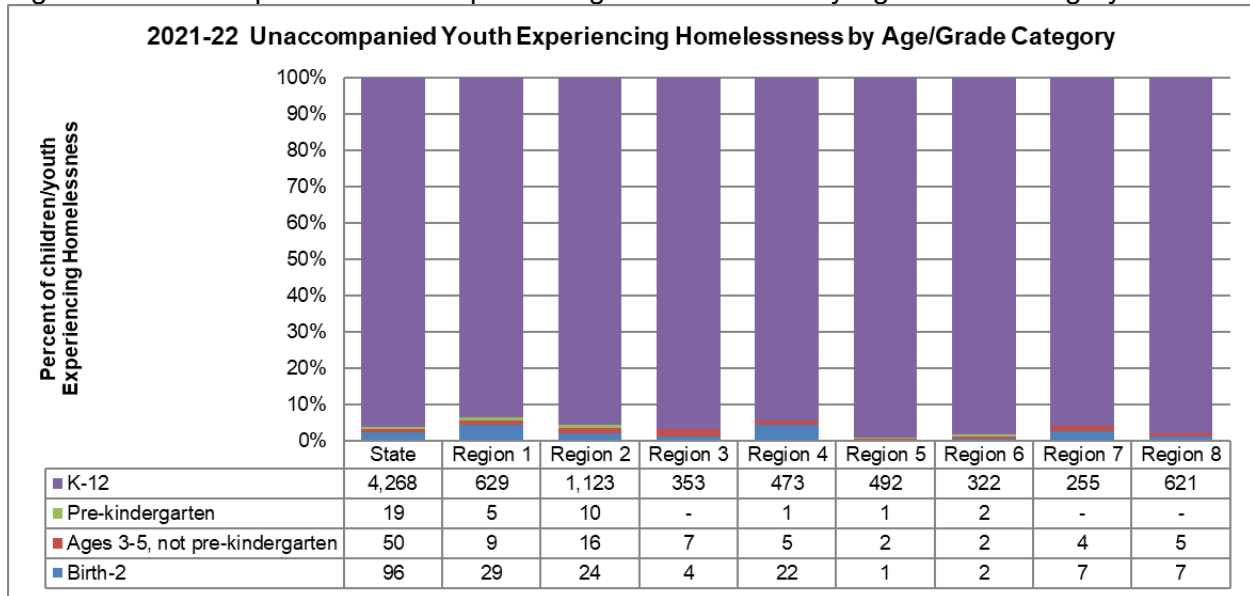
Figure 5. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Nighttime Status



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

Overall, 4,433 (11 percent) of the 40,003 children and youth were identified as unaccompanied youth. This proportion has stayed the same over the past few years. Figure 6 shows the age/grade breakdown of the 4,433 children and youth identified as unaccompanied and experiencing homelessness.

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



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 40,003 identified children and youth, 9,867 (25 percent) were identified as having a disability. Of these 9,867, the largest percentage of individuals (36 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 – 26 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.

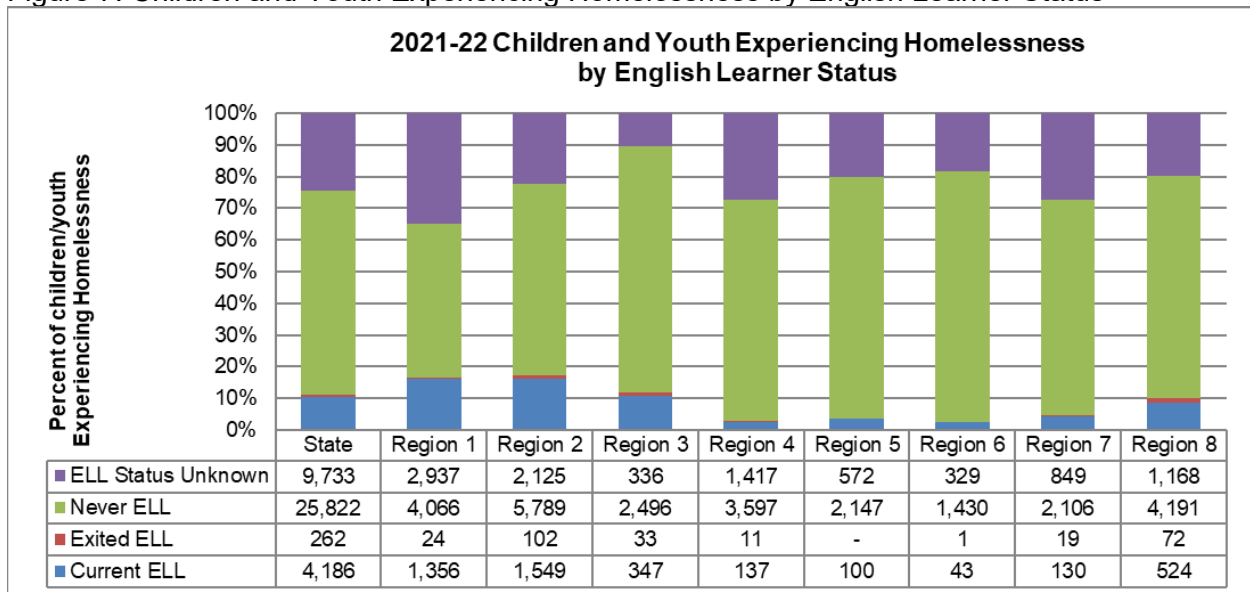
²⁷ This definition of unaccompanied youth differs from the HUD definition, which extends to under 25 years of age <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless>.

Table 1. Disability Category for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Disability Category	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Specific learning disability	3,542	36%
Other health impairment	1,796	18%
Emotional disturbance	1,284	13%
Speech or language impairment	873	9%
Intellectual disability	745	8%
Autistic/autism	672	7%
Disability type unknown	573	6%
Developmental delay	131	1%
Infants and toddlers with disabilities	96	1%
Multiple disabilities	69	1%
Hearing impairment including deafness	38	<1%
Visual impairment including blindness	20	<1%
Traumatic brain injury	18	<1%
Orthopedic impairment	*	*
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 10 percent of the children and youth experiencing homelessness. Regions 1 and 2 (16 percent each) had the most English learners, followed by Region 3 (11 percent). Each of these regions reflects historical migrant patterns and consistently have the highest numbers of English learners.

Figure 7. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by English Learner Status



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

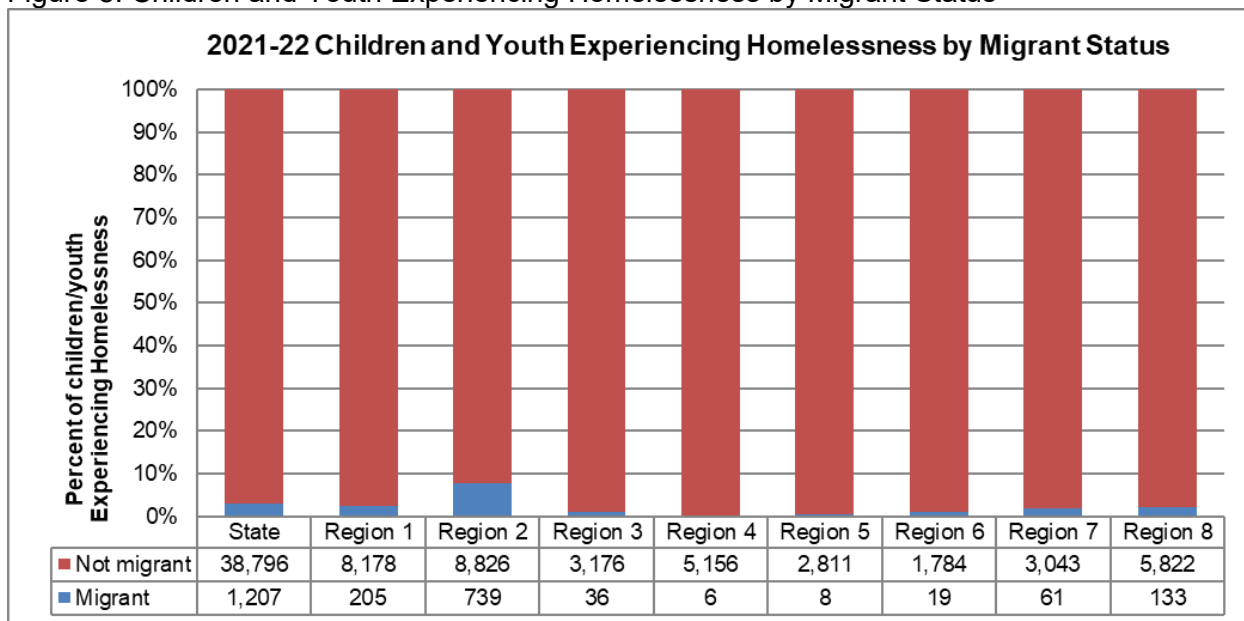
eligibility information in their comprehensive needs assessment. As such, the migrant status of all eligible children and youth experiencing homelessness is documented.

Of the 40,003 identified children and youth, 3 percent (1,207) 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 (1,060 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. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Migrant Status

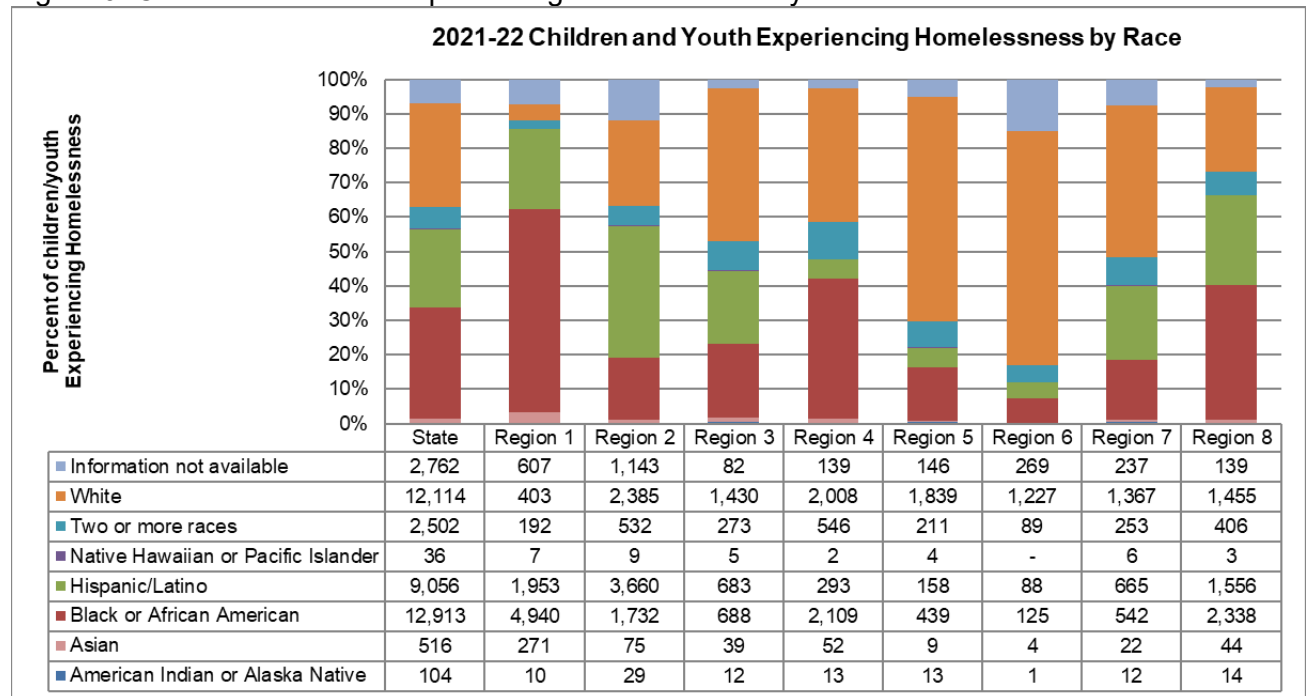


Race and ethnicity data was collected through the PIMS extract for all enrolled students and through the MIS2000 extract for migrant children and youth also identified as experiencing homelessness. In most cases, HMIS extracts also provided race and ethnicity information. Race and ethnicity information is available for 93 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.

2021-22 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 2021-22 Hispanic/Latino individuals comprised 23 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.

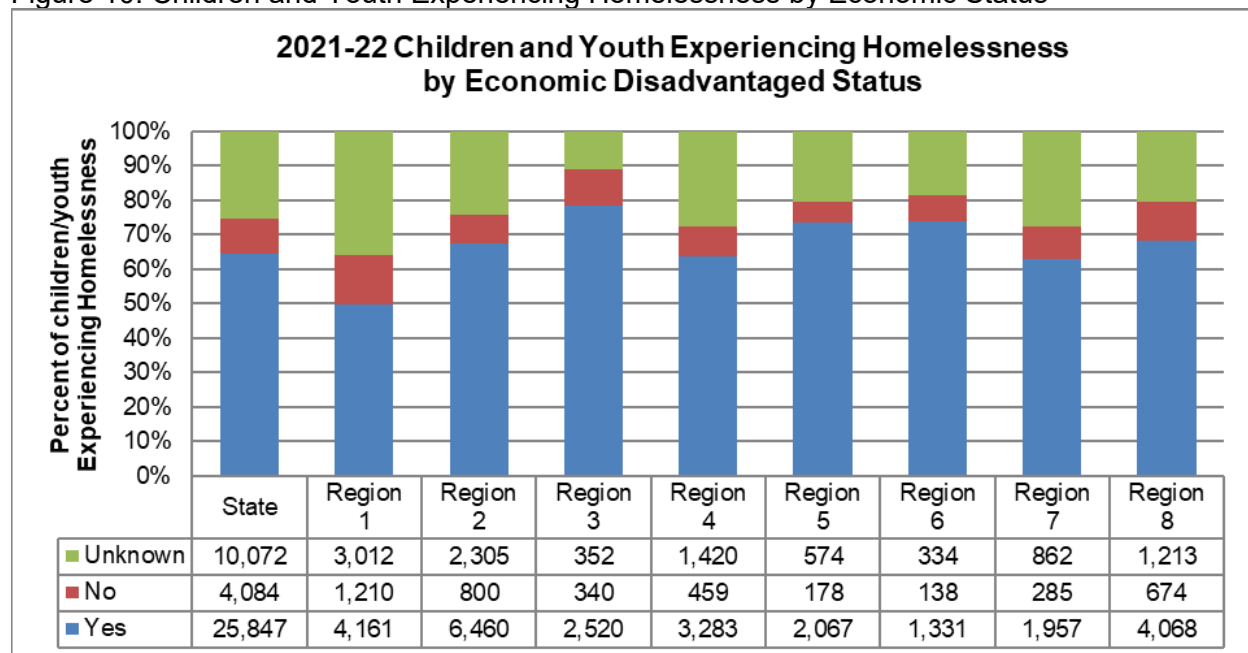
Figure 9. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Race



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 40,003 identified children and youth, 65 percent were designated as economically disadvantaged, and 10 percent were reported as not economically disadvantaged. Three-quarters of the 25 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. Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Economic Status



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, 2021, and shows the number and percentage of total enrollment from low-income families in each LEA and in each school building.

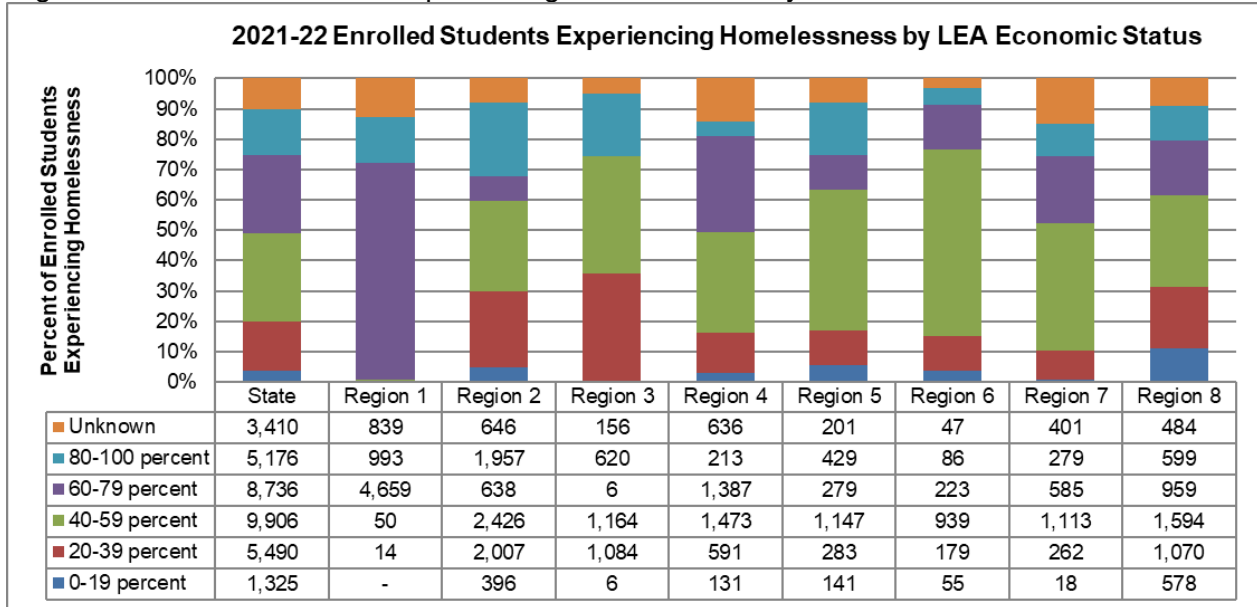
For this analysis, LEAs were grouped into low-income bands: 0-19 percent low-income enrollment, 20-39 percent, 40-59 percent, 60-79 percent, and 80-100 percent. Figure 11 shows the proportion and count of enrolled students experiencing homelessness attending LEAs in each band.

LEAs with a low-income identification rate of 40 percent or more are considered high-poverty LEAs. Overall, 70 percent of enrolled students experiencing homelessness (23,818) 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 10 percent of the enrolled population (3,410) only identified by shelters that did not provide LEA information. Region 1 had 87 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs with Region 6 having 82 percent and Region 5 having 75 percent of students attending high-poverty LEAs. Regions 7, 4, and 2 had 74, 69, and 62 percent, respectively, of identified students attending high-poverty LEAs. Regions 8 and 3 had the lowest percentage of students, 60 and 59 percent, respectively, 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, 20 percent of students experiencing homelessness (6,815) attended LEAs with lower rates of low-income enrollment.

Figure 11. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by LEA Economic Status



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 1,684 students (5 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, 10 percent of enrolled students (3,410) were only identified by shelters that did not provide LEA information. These students are captured in the 'unknown' category.

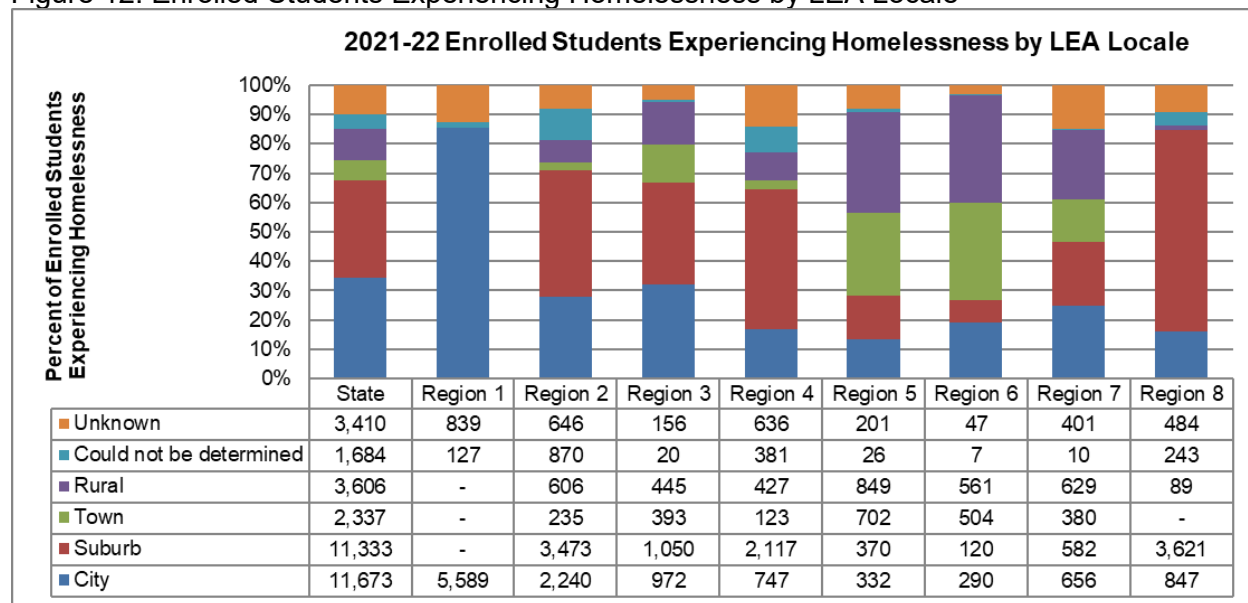
Overall, 34 percent of enrolled students experiencing homelessness (11,673) attended LEAs categorized as city and 33 percent (11,333) attended LEAs categorized as suburb. This is notably different than the overall proportions of enrolled students attending LEAs designated as city (21 percent) and suburb (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.

²⁹ <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/SchoolLocale>

³⁰ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/handbook/data/pdf/appendix_d.pdf

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. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by LEA Locale



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. Understanding of barriers has increased as has reporting of such barriers, though this still varies considerably by LEA. Of enrolled children and youth, 80 percent (27,336 of 34,043) had barrier data, of which 17 percent (4,544) 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

Barriers	State	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Determining eligibility for homeless services	2,908	243	1,353	131	380	67	20	32	682
Transportation	2,075	318	378	158	367	216	75	131	432
Obtaining other medical records	155	79	10	5	8	39	2	5	7
Immunization records	223	92	23	17	20	38	2	19	12
School records	284	92	29	11	41	76	5	17	13
School selection	308	79	20	57	64	42	12	19	15
Other	1,490	455	550	70	121	89	10	43	152
Any barriers	4,544	753	1,525	248	620	298	101	171	828
Total youth for whom data was available	27,336	5,400	6,360	2,643	3,436	2,039	1,290	1,952	4,216
Percentage of youth with any barrier	17%	14%	24%	9%	18%	15%	8%	9%	20%

The most common barrier was determining if a student met the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness and was, therefore, eligible to receive services and support from the ECYEH Program identification and eligibility can become 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. This continues to be an ongoing effort of educating LEAs to the rights of students under the Mc-Kinney-Vento Act and is addressed via 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 (80 percent) of the under-five age group (6,760 children) are children birth to age 2 (3,378 children) or children ages 3 to 5 not enrolled in prekindergarten (2,036 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.

LEA prekindergarten is the only group where barrier information is collected unless an ECYEH staff actively worked to remove a barrier for a child attending a non-LEA prekindergarten

program. Of the 1,346 children identified as experiencing homelessness who attended a prekindergarten program (LEA and non-LEA), 74 percent (992 children) had barrier data. Of those 992 children, 84 children (8 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, 2021, through June 30, 2022, regardless of whether every LEA they attended identified the student as experiencing homelessness.

Of the 34,043 enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness, LEA/school mobility was determined for 30,633 students (90 percent). The 'unable to determine' group (3,410 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-one percent of enrolled students remained in their LEA/school combination during the program year, 16 percent of students enrolled in two LEA/school combinations, and 2 percent enrolled in three or more LEA/school combinations.

While a majority of students (24,214) remained in one LEA/school combination, there are many students (6,419; 19 percent) who changed their LEA/school during the program year. This is an increase when compared to the prior year; during the 2020-21 program year, 3,799 (14 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 (3,410) experienced at least one move during the year.

Table 3. Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Mobility

	Total	1 LEA-School	2 LEA-Schools	>2 LEA-Schools	Unable to Determine	% 1 LEA-School	% 2 LEA-Schools	% >2 LEA-Schools	% Unable to Determine
Region 1	6,555	4,589	975	152	839	70%	15%	2%	13%
Region 2	8,070	6,117	1,145	162	646	76%	14%	2%	8%
Region 3	3,036	2,191	595	94	156	72%	20%	3%	5%
Region 4	4,431	2,758	887	150	636	62%	20%	3%	14%
Region 5	2,480	1,812	394	73	201	73%	16%	3%	8%
Region 6	1,529	1,131	304	47	47	74%	20%	3%	3%
Region 7	2,658	1,671	520	66	401	63%	20%	2%	15%
Region 8	5,284	3,945	766	89	484	75%	14%	2%	9%
State Total	34,043	24,214	5,586	833	3,410	71%	16%	2%	10%

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 through the use of 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, the table should be read with caution as there is no way to ensure that those who report indicate all services provided or select 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, 80 percent (31,837) of the 40,003 identified children and youth were documented as receiving service at the individual level. Region 2 showed the largest proportion of children and youth receiving services followed by Regions 6, 3, and 8.

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.

Table 4. Children and Youth Served by Service Type and Funding Source

Service	Title I	McKinney-Vento	Other
Tutoring or other instructional support	24,493	85	15,193
Clothing to meet a school requirement	2,403	896	1,238
Transportation	1,751	720	4,221
School supplies	3,268	2,304	2,508
Other Services	886	298	2,242
Expedited evaluations	521	106	249
Assistance with participation in school programs	1,268	1,613	2,026
Counseling	709	174	1,925
Coordination between schools and agencies	958	234	1,295
Referral to other programs and services	856	181	1,907
Before-, after-school, mentoring, summer programs	583	244	1,635
Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services	406	81	2,520
Early childhood programs	223	509	749
Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment	596	74	320
Emergency assistance related to school attendance	357	103	430
Addressing needs related to domestic violence	336	85	3,201
Unique count of children/youth receiving Title I services	24,918		
Unique count of children/youth receiving MV services		5,060	
Unique count of children/youth receiving Other services			21,777

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, school supplies and clothing to meet a school requirement were the next most common services provided. McKinney-Vento Act funds were most frequently used to buy school supplies. Assistance with participation in school programs, clothing to meet a school requirement, and transportation were the next most common services offered. For other funds, transportation and referrals for medical, dental, and other health services 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; 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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8
Unique count of children/youth receiving Title I services	24,918	5,393	6,575	2,138	3,161	1,410	952	1,602	3,687
Unique count of children/youth receiving MV services	5,060	3,393	607	16	411	293	78	170	92
Unique count of children/youth receiving Other services	21,777	4,614	6,059	1,546	2,533	1,554	997	1,496	2,978
Total children/youth receiving services	31,837	6,475	8,338	2,607	3,913	2,154	1,498	2,231	4,621
Total children/youth from whom data was available	40,003	8,383	9,565	3,212	5,162	2,819	1,803	3,104	5,955
Proportion of children/youth with any services	80%	77%	87%	81%	76%	76%	83%	72%	78%

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, 24,918 students (73 percent of 34,043 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. 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

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.

analysis provides an overall snapshot of academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

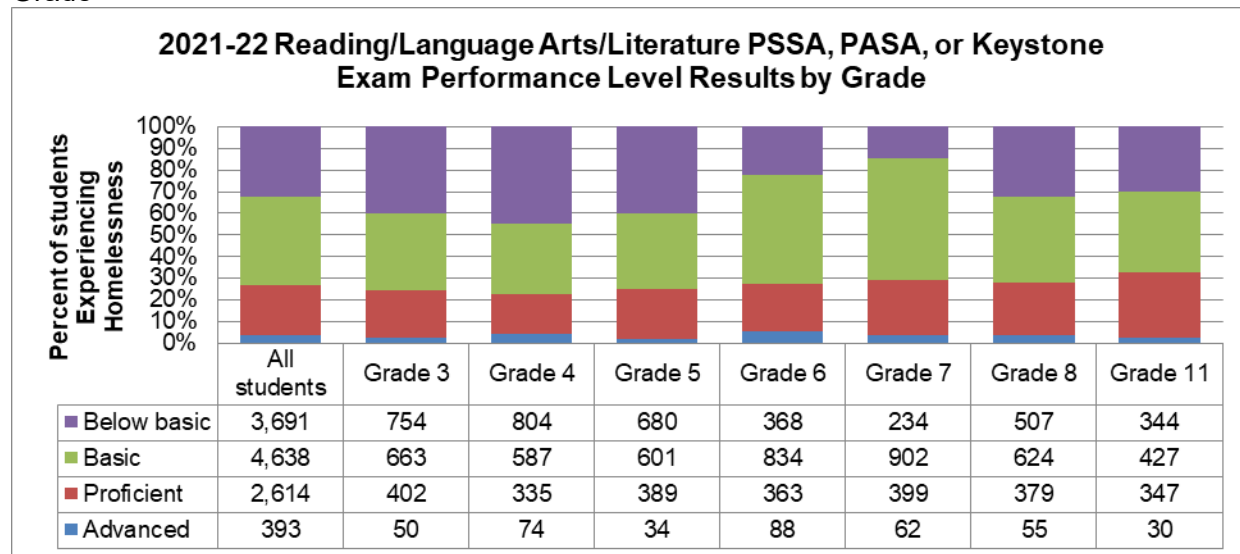
For federal reporting, the designated PDE departments use the homeless flag to prepare their department's *EDFacts* files. *EDFacts* homeless subgroup reporting outcomes are available on the *EDFacts* website.³²

State Academic Assessments: PSSA/PASA and Keystone Exam

State academic assessment data for 2021-22 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; 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.

Figure 13. Reading/Language Arts/Literature PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam Performance by Grade

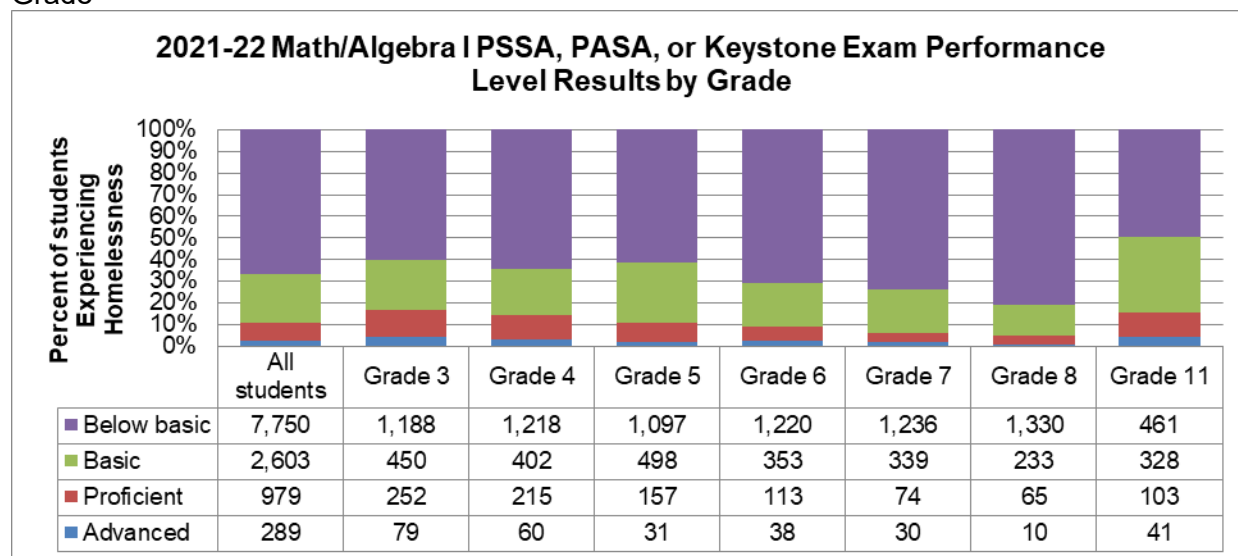


³² <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts>

During the 2021-22 school year, 17,169 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 11,336 students (66 percent) had PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam results available.³³ Figure 13 shows student results in reading/literature by the performance level categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, overall and by grade level.

Overall, 27 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level. This percentage varied by grade level with grade 11 having the greatest percentage of students (33 percent) scoring proficient or advanced and grade 4 having the smallest percentage of students (23 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

Figure 14. Math/Algebra I PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam Performance Level Results by Grade



During the 2021-22 school year, 17,169 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 11,621 students (68 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.

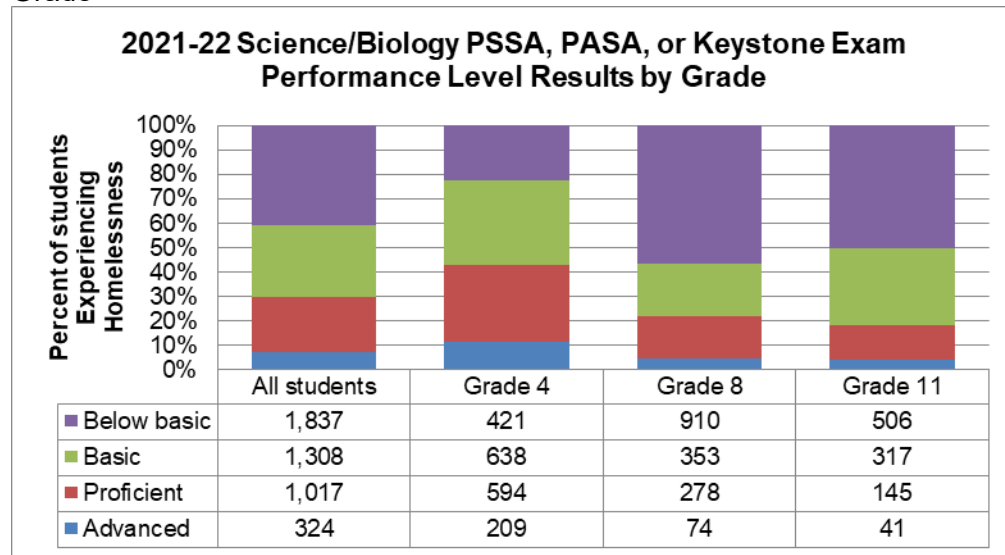
Overall, 11 percent of students assessed scored in the proficient or advanced level. This percentage varied by grade level, with grade 3 grade having the greatest percentage of students (17 percent) scoring in the proficient or advanced level and grade 8 having the smallest percentage of students (5 percent) scoring proficient or advanced.

During the 2021-22 school year, 7,095 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 4,486 students (63 percent) had

³³ English Learner students who have not been in the United States for at least one year are exempt from taking the Reading/Literature Exam.

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. Science/Biology PSSA, PASA, or Keystone Exam Performance Level Results by Grade



Overall, 30 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced level, with grade 4 having the largest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (43 percent) and grade 11 having the smallest percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced (18 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 population³⁴ in all grades and content areas. This has been a consistent pattern each year.

School Attendance

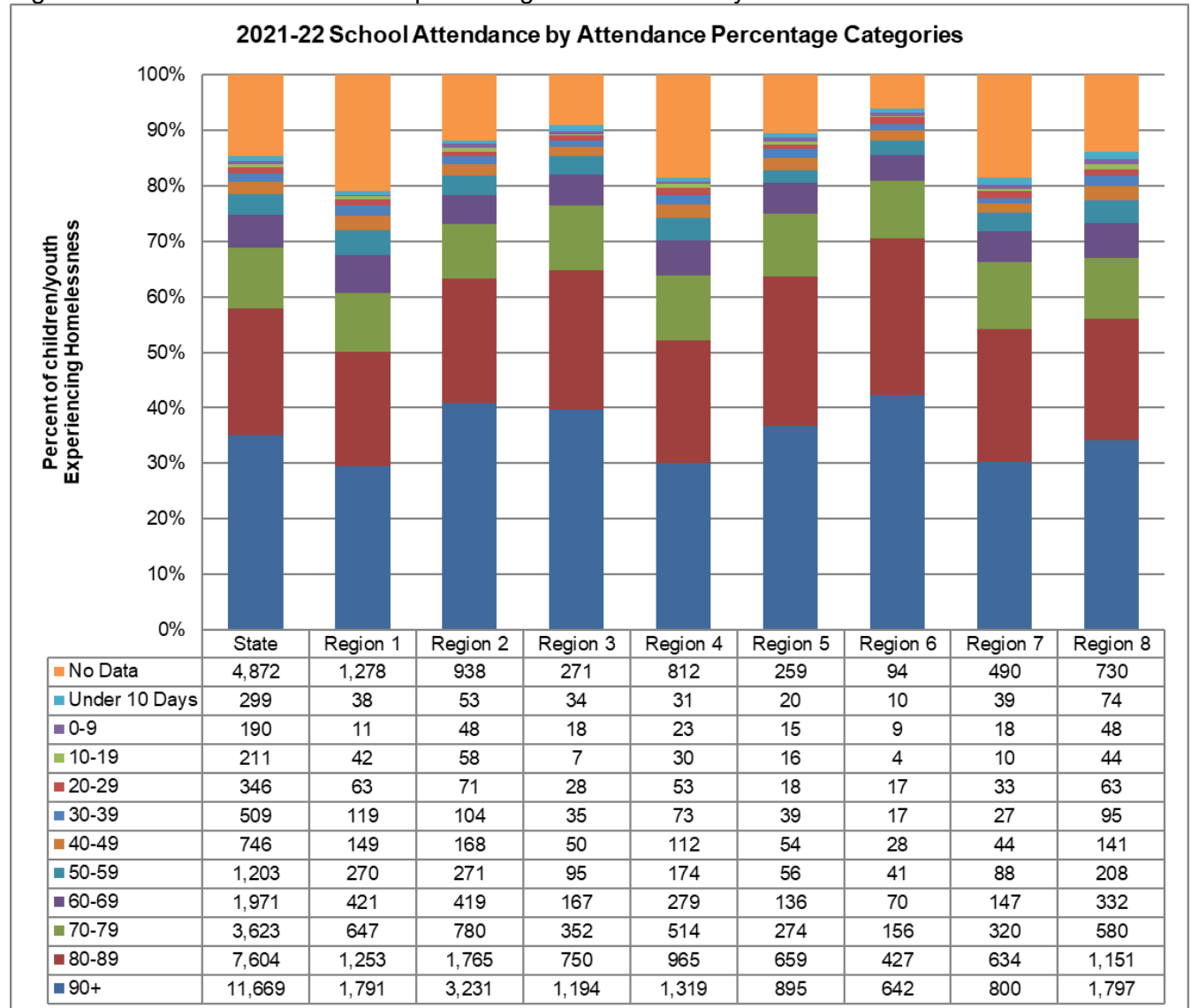
Student absence is defined as: “a student was absent if he or she was not physically on school grounds and was not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for at least half the school day.”³⁵

³⁴ **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.

³⁵ FS195-Chronic Absenteeism File Specifications v16.0

Chronic absenteeism for *EDFacts* reporting is defined as: “the unduplicated count³⁶ 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.

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



Attendance data for all students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 was analyzed. Evaluators looked at a student’s 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 for a more accurate picture of a student’s school attendance in a given year than within

³⁶ 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.

each school attendance and takes into consideration attendance gaps between school enrollments.

Of the 33,243 identified enrolled K-12 students, 84 percent (28,072) of students had school attendance data, 15 percent (4,872) did not have attendance data, and 1 percent (299) were not enrolled in an LEA for 10 or more days.

Of the 28,072 students with data, 42 percent (11,669) attended school 90 percent or more of the days in which they were enrolled, 27 percent (7,604) attended 80-89 percent of days enrolled, and 13 percent (3,623) attended 70-79 percent of days enrolled. The remaining 18 percent of students (5,176) attended 69 percent or less of the days in which they were enrolled. Based on these data, 58 percent of students would be considered chronically absent. Figure 16 shows school attendance by the attendance percentage categories.

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, though grade 11 students who graduated.

There were 15,479 students identified as experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grades 7-12, of which 3.8 percent dropped out of school, which is slightly higher than the prior year's 3.4 percent. State dropout data for 2020-21, the most current available for comparison, showed a dropout rate of 1.21 percent.³⁷

Grade 12 had the highest percentage of students dropping out at 7.3 percent (220 of 3,009 students); grade 11 had the next highest rate at 6.6 percent (143 of 2,183 students); and grade 10 had a rate of 3.8 percent (90 of 2,339 students).

In terms of graduation, there were 3,009 grade 12 students, of which 2,737 (91 percent) had graduation status information. Of these 2,737 whose status was known, 1,989 graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma (72.7 percent), 220 dropped out (8.0 percent), and 528 (19.3 percent) did not graduate.

It is unknown how remote instruction during the pandemic affected these data. It should also be noted that 37 students designated as being in grade 11 either graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

ARP-HCY IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Of the 715 eligible McKinney-Vento (MV) subgrantees, 84 percent ultimately participated in ARP-HCY funding. Table 6 indicates the breakdown of funding provided, with a total of 402 LEAs accepting direct ARP-HCY II funds and 196 LEAs being part of a region-specific consortium-level ARP-HCY II funding groups. 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 117 LEAs opted not to participate in either direct funding or their region's consortium for the ARP-HCY II funding.

³⁷ <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Dropouts/Pages/default.aspx>

Table 6. ARP-HCY LEA Counts

ECYEH Region	Individual Funded LEAs	LEAs in Funded Consortium	Non-Funded LEAs
1	40	23	25
2	65	22	9
3	35	16	5
4	74	50	29
5	46	17	10
6	38	14	13
7	54	24	12
8	50	30	14
Total	402	196	117

Additionally, ARP-HCY I funds were provided to the eight ECYEH regions through the regional LEA leads as well as to the two support groups, the contracted evaluator and the contract technical assistance teams. These regional funds are to be used at the discretion of the regional teams themselves.

Because ARP-HCY funds were not made available to the participating LEAs or consortium leads until much later in the 2021-22 ECYEH program year, few of the dollars provided were utilized during that period as most LEAs did not start program implementation. LEAs completed an Implementation Survey to gain a better understanding about how they intended to use ARP-HCY II funding to serve homeless students in the 2022-23 program year. This Implementation Survey will be administered to LEAs annually at the end of each school year to follow implementation over time and to guide technical assistance and support by the state and regional ARP-HCY teams.

The Baseline Implementation Survey was conducted in June 2021. Findings indicate that 273 of the 402 (68 percent) LEA ARP-HCY II funded agencies responded, including 265 school districts, charter/cyber charter schools, and all eight regional consortiums (who represent the 196 LEAs contained within). This response level represents over three-quarters (77 percent) of the ARP-HCY II dollar allocation. As such, it is believed that this collection of responses provides an appropriate level of representation of the overall intent of usage.

A summary of findings from the Implementation Survey indicates that the top three needs being addressed by LEAs are transportation (66 percent), supplies (55 percent), and attendance (37 percent).

To increase identification, enrollment, retention or educational success of their children and youth experiencing homelessness, LEAs plan to use ARP-HCY II funds to provide transportation to children and youth so they can attend classes and participate fully in school activities (74 percent), purchase needed supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items) (61 percent), and/or to identify students for summer services or enrichment programs (40 percent).

Of the 273 LEAs and consortiums who responded, 178 (65 percent) indicated that they have summer school programming for the following age-grade levels: pre-kindergarten (10 percent), kindergarten to fifth grade (89 percent), sixth to eighth grade (75 percent), and ninth to twelfth grade (65 percent). It was also found that over half (57 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 (85 percent), and August (33 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 (92 percent) and/or math (89 percent), and nearly half (45 percent) of the programs also had STEM/STEAM components. The programs mostly included in-person interactions (72 percent) or a combination of in-person and virtual interactions (20 percent), and over three-quarters (81 percent) anticipated utilizing ARP funds (ARP-HCY or ESSR/ARP) to support them.

LEAs indicated which areas they would like additional professional development or technical assistance in using ARP-HCY II funds to serve children and youth experiencing homelessness. The top four areas requested were mental health support (32 percent), attendance (25 percent), fiscal management of ARP-HCY II funds (23 percent), and transportation (21 percent); once again, highlighting the importance of issues related to transportation and attendance in the children and youth experiencing homelessness subpopulation.

Reflections, Implications, and Recommendations for Improvement

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, 40,003 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness in 2021-22. This is an increase from 32,666 identified children and youth in 2020-21. Likely contributing to the increase in identification was the re-opening of physical school buildings and many provider spaces, including many shelters, as the COVID-19 pandemic eased. The number of enrolled students identified as experiencing homelessness also increased from 27,235 in 2020-21 to 34,043 in 2021-22. An increased focus on identification and enrollment in 2021-22 because of ARP-HCY I funds may also be contributing to the increase in identified children and youth.

There are several trends that remain consistent for this population.

1. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are predominantly economically disadvantaged.
2. The majority of students experiencing homelessness attend LEAs that have high levels of poverty.
3. The majority of students remain in their LEA/school of origin.
4. Despite some consistency for a large portion of enrolled students, there are some who experience mobility and/or barriers to enrollment.
5. Transportation remains one of the most common barriers statewide.
6. Slightly more than half of the students experiencing homelessness exhibit chronic absenteeism. This was true for 2020-21 as well, even with the year being mainly remote/hybrid instruction for many LEAs at the time. Regardless of contributing factors, 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.

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 complete 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 an LEA.

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

1. Transportation for students experiencing homelessness remains a challenge among the regions. Continue to explore creative transportation options and engage the state office to identify or support solutions that may be helpful to LEAs struggling with transportation issues.
2. Continue to maintain relationships and data sharing agreements with local, regional, or state Continuum of Care contemporaries to ensure that HMIS reporting continues for all 57 counties.
3. Continue to educate and support LEAs in the requirement of reporting their under-five population, be it those children who attend their prekindergarten programs, or non-enrolled younger siblings of enrolled students.
4. 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.
5. Students experiencing homelessness have high chronic absenteeism and dropout incidences and a lower graduation rate. Continue to collaborate and explore interventions that offer additional instructional support – such as tutoring in shelters by college students, priority for service in LEA or community after-school or summer programs, or inclusion in other state or federally funded programs such as Migrant Education, English as a second language, or 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Use LEA outcomes to identify struggling LEAs and consider increasing professional development or technical assistance opportunities designed to assist LEAs with examining students' experiencing homelessness school attendance, participation in academic support activities, and assessment data. LEAs should examine their homeless students much like they examine other subgroups of students in their schools.
6. Given the increased needs, collaboration, or services resulting from increased reporting of children and youth experiencing homelessness in recent years, increased outreach to non-LEA entities, and the addition of LEA monitoring preparation and follow-up, consideration may need to be given to restructuring of ECYEH staff duties. Consider the most time-effective delivery methods for training, technical assistance, and outreach, such as more regional, county, or IU located trainings, the utilization of technology for 1:1 or small group technical assistance, or participation in only the most critical meetings, boards, and consortiums.
7. 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.

8. Continue routine follow-up with all non-reporting LEAs to more accurately capture the total number of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

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.