

Public schools kept nearly 800,000 homeless students in school during the 2007-08 school year with the support of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. The number of homeless students entering our classrooms continues to grow, and school districts need additional support to help these children and youth stay in school even though they have lost their homes.

Since the beginning of the Great Recession, 26 states collectively report an increase of over 221,000 homeless students, or 50 percent. Although these children are at risk of health/mental health problems and are less likely to succeed in school, we know how to help them succeed.

As Congress considers a Jobs Bill, at least \$100 million should be included to save/create nearly 3,300 jobs to address the continued increase in homeless children and youth – many of whom became homeless due to their parents' job loss. With additional federal support, we can help thousands of homeless children continue in their education and achieve the American dream.

RISE IN HOMELESSNESS:

- **17 PERCENT INCREASE IN 2008:** During the 2007-2008 school year, school districts reported a 17 percent increase over the prior year in homeless students (679,724 homeless students enrolled during 2006-2007; 794,617 homeless students enrolled during 2007-2008, an increase of 114,893 students, or 17 percent).¹
- **CONTINUED INCREASE IN STUDENT HOMELESSNESS:** One out of five school districts responding to a national survey (330 out of 1,716 school districts) reported enrolling more homeless students by Thanksgiving of 2008 than they enrolled during the entire previous school year. These school districts enrolled 31,000 homeless students during the 2007-2008 school year. By Thanksgiving, they enrolled 41,000 homeless students - an increase of 10,000 in just the first few months of the school year.²
- **LATEST DATA ON INCREASES IN HOMELESS STUDENTS:** Although data is not available for all states, half of all states collectively report a 50 percent increase in homeless students for the 2008-2009 school year (see chart on Page 2).

SCHOOL = STABILITY FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Federal education law allows homeless students to stay in their schools even if they are forced to move outside the school district when they lose their homes. Through the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, school district staff (McKinney Vento homeless liaisons) identify homeless students and coordinate a variety of supports to help stabilize their education. School districts can provide homeless students with transportation to school, tutoring, school supplies, counseling, service referrals, and a variety of other opportunities, allowing homeless students to have some semblance of stability while the rest of their lives are fraught with uncertainty.

Unfortunately, the influx of homeless students—combined with state and local budget cuts—has pushed school systems to the brink.

STIMULATING A SOLUTION

As Congress develops a Jobs Bill, 3,292 jobs in school districts should be saved or created by allocating \$100 million to address the unprecedented spike in student homelessness.³ These jobs could be created with an appropriation through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, or through a set-aside in the education portion of the Jobs Bill.⁴

Such jobs could include McKinney Vento Homeless Liaisons, transportation coordinators, and other specialized instructional support personnel (school social workers, outreach staff, school psychologists, etc.) serving homeless students.

CONCLUSION

No child should go without a home. While parents struggle to find jobs and safe places for their families to live, schools are often the only source of stability within reach of homeless children. Supporting the work of school districts to keep homeless children in school will simultaneously save/create jobs while supporting the success of America's most vulnerable children.

HOMELESS STUDENTS: 2006-2009

Preliminary Data⁵

State	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	Numerical Increase (07-08 to 08-09)	Percentage Increase (07-08 to 08-09)	Numerical Increase (06-07 to 08-09)	Percentage Increase (06-07 to 08-09)
AZ	18,883	21,380	25,336	3,956	19%	5,708	29%
CA	178,014	224,249	288,233	63,984	29%	110,219	62%
CO	11,978	12,302	15,834	3,532	29%	3,856	32%
CT	1,980	2,017	2,387	370	18%	407	21%
FL	30,878	34,375	41,286	6,911	20%	10,408	34%
GA	14,017	15,700	23,724	8,024	51%	9,707	69%
IN	8,249	8,480	10,364	1,884	22%	2,115	26%
ID	1,875	2,112	2,710	598	28%	835	45%
IA⁶	2,886	5,918	3,845	-2,073	-35%	959	33%
KS	3,569	4,890	6,700	1,810	37%	3,131	88%
MD	8,473	8,813	10,485	1,672	19%	2,012	24%
MN	6,008	8,163	8,339	152	2%	2,307	38%
NV	5,374	6,647	8,670	2,023	30%	3,296	61%
NJ	4,279	6,033	7,890	1,857	31%	3,611	84%
NH	1,983	2,087	2,130	43	2%	147	7%
NY	46,232	63,394	76,527	13,133	21%	30,295	66%
NM	4,383	6,152	8,380	2,275	37%	3,992	91%
NC	12,659	16,937	18,815	1,878	11%	6,156	49%
ND	1,209	686	1,047	493	72%	-30	-2%
OR	15,517	15,839	18,051	2,212	14%	2,534	16%
PA⁷	12,935	12,799	16,754	3,955	31%	3,819	30%
SC	6,033	7,413	8,744	1,331	18%	2,711	45%
UT	9,995	11,264	14,043	2,779	25%	4,048	41%
VA	9,898	11,776	12,768	992	8%	2,870	29%
WA	16,853	18,670	20,780	2,110	11%	3,927	23%
WI	8,103	9,331	10,914	1,583	17%	2,811	35%
Total	442,263	537,427	664,756	127,329	24%	222,493	50%

The First Focus Campaign for Children is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization affiliated with First Focus, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization. The Campaign for Children advocates directly for Congress to ensure children and families are a priority in federal policy and budget decisions. For more information about the Campaign for Children's Housing & Homelessness and Education portfolios, contact Phillip Lovell (PhillipL@firstfocus.net).

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) is a membership organization of educators and others serving homeless students and their families. For more information about NAEHCY, contact Barbara Duffield (BDuffield@naehcy.org).

NOTES:

¹ National Center for Homeless Education. (2009). Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Analysis of Data from the 2007-08 Federally Required State Data Collection for the McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and Comparison of the 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 Data Collections. Greensboro, North Carolina: Author. NCHE publications are supported through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>.

² Underlying data reported in Duffield, B. and Lovell, P. (2008) *The Economic Crisis Hits Home*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and First Focus.

³ Between August and September of 2009, ARRA created or saved 154.3 jobs through state expenditures totaling \$4,687,808 for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. Using this data, each position supporting homeless student cost \$30,381 ($\$4,687,808/154 \text{ jobs} = \$30,381$ per job). With an appropriation of \$100 million, an estimated 3,292 jobs would be created ($\$100 \text{ million}/\$30,381$ per job). Source: U.S. Department of Education (November, 2009). American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Report: Summary of Programs and State-by-State Data. Washington, DC: Author, P. 6.

⁴ The Jobs For Main Street Act, passed by the House of Representatives on December 16, 2009, includes a \$23 billion Education Jobs Fund.

⁵ Data for 2008-2009 are preliminary and were reported to the authors by state Departments of Education. Data for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years were reported by states to the authors or were reported in: National Center for Homeless Education. (2009). Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Analysis of Data from the 2007-08 Federally Required State Data Collection for the McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and Comparison of the 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 Data Collections. Greensboro, North Carolina: Author. NCHE publications are supported through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>.

⁶ The 2007-2008 increase is largely attributed to flooding.

⁷ Data for Pennsylvania reflect students served, rather than enrolled. Data for the remaining states reflect the number of homeless students enrolled in public schools.