

# Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento)



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## PURPOSE

The intent of the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program is to remove all educational barriers facing children and youth experiencing homelessness, with an emphasis on educational enrollment, attendance and success.

## WHO QUALIFIES?

**Children or youth who lack a fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residence qualify for the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** This includes children and youth who:

- Share 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;
- 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;
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
- Are migratory children.

Many homeless families with children, and unaccompanied youth, are forced into motels or other temporary situations because there is no family or youth shelter available in the community. If shelters are available, many are full, or may have policies that separate the family or prohibit unaccompanied minors.

Children and youth who share the housing with others (doubled-up) and motel situations are extremely vulnerable, living in precarious, unstable and sometimes unsafe conditions. They may suffer the life-long impacts of toxic stress if their living situations are not stabilized.

## UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

**In addition to providing a definition of homeless, the McKinney-Vento Act defines unaccompanied youth as youth who fit the definition of homeless and are "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" [42 U.S.C. § 11434a (6)].**

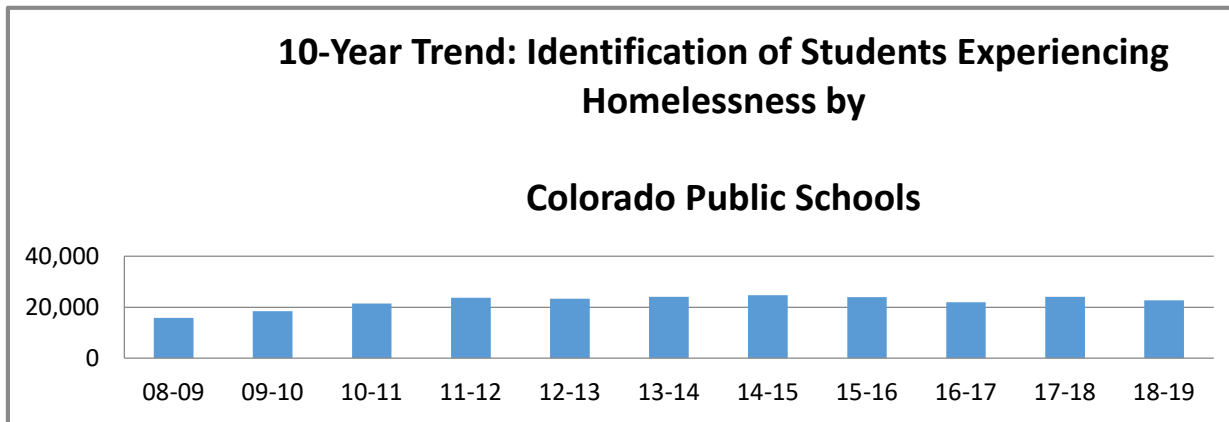
- The number of unaccompanied homeless youth identified and served by Colorado public schools reached 2,662 during the 2018-19 school year, double the number identified during 2009-10 school year. This exponential growth reflects changing demographic and increasing needs of this population.
- These youth are among the most vulnerable, as they are dealing with the crises of homelessness without a safe, supportive parent or guardian. Education is reported as the most stable element in their lives, however, access and attendance can present as barriers.

## Educational Rights of McKinney-Vento Eligible Children and Youth

- A McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison in every school district who has the skills and capacity to carry out the duties of the position
- Identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination activities
- Immediate enrollment with full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
- Choice between the neighborhood school or the school of origin (school last enrolled in or attended)
- Transportation to the school of origin (including preschool)
- Immediate access to free school meals and educational services for which they are eligible
- Automatic eligibility for Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015
- Referrals to health care, dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing and other appropriate services
- Unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

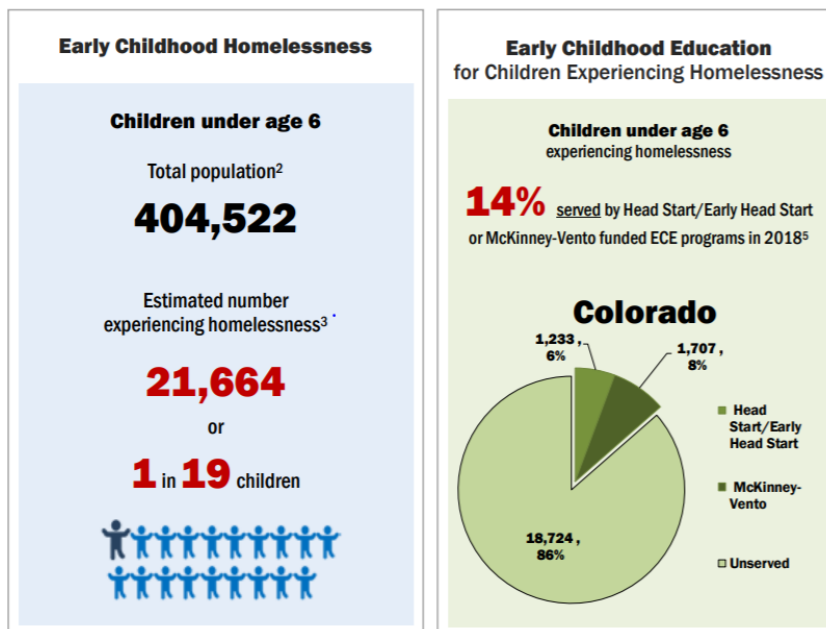
## STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN COLORADO

During the 2018-19 school year, Colorado public schools identified and served 22,679 students experiencing homelessness. This includes birth-2, 3-5 (not kindergarten) and pre-K-12.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD HOMELESSNESS IN COLORADO

The U.S. Department of Education released *Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile*, a 2020 report providing a snapshot of early childhood data available for children under the age of 6 who are experiencing homelessness in each state. For Colorado, this is the snapshot:



### Where can I learn more?

- To learn more [visit the Colorado Department of Education Homeless Education webpage](#) or contact Kerry Wrenick at [wrenick\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:wrenick_k@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6930.
- For information on district McKinney-Vento implementation, [contact local district liaisons](#).
- [View additional data on Colorado's Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program](#).
- [View a summary from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth on major Amendments on Homelessness and Foster Care in "The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015."](#)
- [View all CDE fact sheets](#).