

Homeless Education (Title X)



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Overview

The federal McKinney-Vento “Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program” was developed to ensure that children and youth in homeless situations have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool, as provided to other children and youth.

In 1987, Congress enacted an omnibus bill to provide assistance to growing numbers of homeless people nationwide: the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Programs and funding under the McKinney Act went to several offices, including Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Education. The Act was reauthorized in 1994 as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the Homeless Education Program became “Title X.” Districts receiving Title I-A funds are also required under the NCLB to reserve a portion of their I-A funds for services to homeless children and youth, particularly those in non-Title I-A recipient schools.

The program also works in close partnership with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) program, and Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten programs. Other federal program partners include the regional Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs funded under the Family & Youth Services Bureau, and Federal Aid for Financial Student Assistance (FAFSA) for higher education. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Homeless Education Program is also represented on the Governor’s Ending Homelessness Advisory Council.

State and School Requirements

Under federal law, each state is required to designate a State Coordinator of Homeless Education to implement the program. At ODE, this program is housed in the Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, with the School Improvement and Accountability Team.

All districts are required to designate a District Homeless Liaison to implement the requirements of Title X locally. With the Liaison’s assistance, districts must identify and assist homeless students, provide immediate school enrollment, expedite student records transfers and school placement, arrange for school of origin transportation when feasible and needed, and report data on the number of homeless students served each year. Homeless students and families have rights to appeal school placement determinations, with dispute resolution services provided as needed.

Districts may compete for a limited amount of federal McKinney-Vento Act grant-in-aid funds, in the form of district subgrants provided at regular two- and three-year intervals.

Program Results

Economic challenges due to the recent mortgage foreclosure crisis, long-term unemployment figures, and a slow recovery from the recession in Oregon, have had the impact of increasing homelessness throughout the state. In the 23 years that Oregon has been counting homeless students, the count has risen each year. For the 2009-10 school year, the K-12 total was over 19,000.

The stimulus funds made available to districts in 2009-10 helped to address the needs of the increasing numbers of K-12 homeless students, and also helped districts reach out to Oregon preschool programs so homeless children enrolled in these programs can be identified for extra assistance as needed when they enter kindergarten.

Districts that track test results in reading and math for the homeless students they serve see increases in student performance when students are able to attend the same school for the entire school year. The mobility of homelessness has adverse effects on both student performance and attendance, which many district liaisons work diligently to address.

Effective Practices and Models

Examples of highly-effective programs are those that collaborate well with regionally-organized efforts to end homelessness, poverty and hunger in Oregon.

The Jackson County “Maslow Project” was the 2008 recipient of a national award for “Outstanding School-Based Program Providing Educational Services to Homeless Students.” This cooperative model enables homeless youth and their families to receive case-managed services in human services and public education, saving money and enhancing the quality and timeliness of services.

A program based at the Lane Educational Service District has also been very effective. A single subgrant and “Super Liaison” provides coordination for liaisons in all Lane County districts, both urban and rural.

In Lincoln County SD there are four area Liaisons at this time, and four literacy centers located in Newport, Waldport, Lincoln City and Toledo. Lincoln County has urban centers along Highway 101, as well as isolated rural communities in the Coast Range. The district program collaborates extensively with community partners such as the Lincoln County Commission on Children and Families.

Related Links and References

- ODE web page on Homeless Education – Title X - <http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/HomelessEd>
- National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE - <http://www.serve.org/nche/>
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth - <http://www.naehcy.org/>

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