Homelessness and Children in Georgia

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. In FY2018, approximately 41,089 students in Georgia were considered homeless.

Being homeless doesn't always mean sleeping outside.

73% of the students who reported experiencing homelessness said they were staying with extended family or friends.

Georgia has a growing population of students experiencing homelessness. These students are more likely to:
• be suspended
• miss school
• fall far behind in reading and math

MCKINNEY - VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

The primary piece of federal legislation focused on addressing the needs of homeless people in the United States. It was first signed into law in 1987, and has been amended and reauthorized several times.

MCKINNEY - VENTO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

The section of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with problems faced by homeless youth with enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. The program requires state education agencies to ensure that each homeless child has equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as their peers.

MCKINNEY-VENTO COUNT OF HOMELESS STUDENTS IN GEORGIA*

*Data is most likely underreported. Other estimates suggest there were between 45,000 and 74,000 homeless youth in Georgia in 2013.

DISPARITIES IN THE MAKEUP OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

Black students make up a disproportionate amount of Georgia's homeless student population.

www.georgiavoices.org
In 2018, the Georgia Department of Education subgranted more than $2.2 million in 43 school districts.

**EXAMPLES OF MCKINNEY-VENTO PROGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARTOW COUNTY</th>
<th>ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS</th>
<th>CHATTOOGA COUNTY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The district’s McKinney-Vento program engages parents, school staff, and community partners through the Bartow “Give A Kid A Chance” program. It provides back to school supplies; haircuts; hearing, vision, and dental screenings; books; and other resources to McKinney-Vento students.</td>
<td>Atlanta Public Schools has partnered with the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) to provide 50 housing vouchers to children and families that are identified as homeless based on the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.</td>
<td>The district’s Homeless Liaison worked closely with Family Connection, as well as 20 community agencies and numerous community volunteers, to provide school supplies, food, and hygiene products as well as informational resources to approximately 400 McKinney-Vento students.</td>
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<td>$43,858</td>
<td>$93,698</td>
<td>$42,298</td>
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**RISK FACTORS AND CAUSES OF CHILD AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

**Economic Problems**
- Child and family poverty
- Employment issues
- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of affordable housing

**System Involvement**
- Involvement with foster care or the juvenile justice system
- Transitioning out of foster care and residential or institutional facilities

**Family Problems**
- Abuse/neglect and trauma
- Single or youth parents
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse

**Population at Higher Risk**
- Racial/ethnic minorities and LGBTQ youth are disproportionately affected by child homelessness

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Increase public awareness of the scope and impact of homelessness on children and families
- Improve program design and service delivery to meet unique needs of homeless children and families

Inform [state and local policies and plans](https://tinyurl.com/MaltreatmentBrainRefs2019) to address the needs of homeless children and families.

- Increase the availability and equitable distribution of quality and affordable housing.
- Support policies, including rent subsidies, which protect families and children from unsafe housing, hardship, baseless evictions, and unjustified fees and penalties.
- Identify and disseminate successful models of interagency coordination across child welfare, homelessness, and housing networks.
- Improve access to educational opportunities that will ensure success for children and youth who are homeless.
- Prevent youth who age out of foster care and unaccompanied youth from becoming homeless.
- Collect data on housing status to increase knowledge of the scope of homelessness.