

North Carolina Homeless Education Program

2024-2025SY Statewide Assessment Summary Report

The North Carolina Homeless Education Program (NCHEP) conducts a Statewide Assessment on an annual basis. During the 2024-2025SY, the assessment was completed by 115 traditional LEA homeless liaisons. The information collected in this assessment is invaluable to the State Director's office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) in targeting and directly supporting students who are experiencing homelessness through the work of the EHCY staff with homeless liaisons from across the state. This information will ensure that state-level activities and technical assistance being provided are impactful to this vulnerable population's academic success.

Homeless liaisons were asked to share information in twenty objective areas. Below is an overview of their responses in each of these areas.

Objective 1: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.*

Homeless liaisons reported that they have participated in training or other learning opportunities that have increased their knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act. They have, in turn, provided information and/or training to LEA staff members, shelter personnel, and community agencies on the law and the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

Objective 2: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools within the district.*

One hundred percent of the homeless liaisons shared that the educational rights posters are displayed in all schools within the LEA and that the district ensures that someone is always in the role of the homeless liaison.

Objective 3: *All schools within the district have provisions that help ensure the immediate enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.*

Homeless liaisons reported that students experiencing homelessness are immediately enrolled, whether or not they have the required records necessary for enrollment, and that all schools waive the required proof of residency form. The homeless liaisons provide information to parents, guardians, or unaccompanied homeless youths about their educational rights under the McKinney-Vento Act and provide written notice about their right to dispute an enrollment decision in the event of a disagreement. Records are being maintained of all possible disputes and technical assistance interventions.

Objective 4: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled in the school that is most likely to meet their educational needs.*

Ninety-five percent of homeless liaisons strongly agreed that the students experiencing homelessness in their LEA were enrolled in the school that met their educational needs, while the remaining five percent agreed.

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Objective 5: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to appropriate general education programs that are designed to help them achieve school success.*

Overall, homeless liaisons shared that the students experiencing homelessness were linked with the programs and services needed to participate fully in school activities, including academic tutoring and the opportunity to make up for credit loss due to homelessness.

Objective 6: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to free federal meal programs.*

The assessment results show that all students identified as experiencing homelessness in North Carolina have access to the child nutrition program in their LEA.

Objective 7: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to transportation services to ensure full participation in school.*

Homeless liaisons reported that transportation to and from the school of origin, which is comparable to that of housed students, was being implemented expeditiously to avoid any educational disruption. It is noted that fifty percent of the respondents strongly agreed that cross-district collaboration occurs efficiently for students temporarily living outside of their school of origin district. While six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that access to transportation outside the district was occurring. Transportation contracts with the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth are reported as being used by most of the LEAs.

Objective 8: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to health and counseling services to ensure full participation in school.*

Students who are experiencing homelessness in North Carolina are being provided with health services that are at least comparable to their housed classmates. Homeless liaisons overwhelmingly reported that medical and counseling referrals are being made, along with provisions to ensure students experiencing homelessness are receiving their immunizations.

Objective 9: *Children and youth experiencing homelessness have prompt access to appropriate education services.*

Across the board, it was reported that special education evaluations and services for students experiencing homelessness with IEPs are being expedited. Homeless liaisons also strongly agreed or agreed that the students who are intellectually or academically gifted and talented have access to appropriate services upon enrollment.

Objective 10: *The LEA takes steps to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to Title I programs and services within the district.*

One hundred percent of homeless liaisons reported that the students experiencing homelessness in their district are provided Title I services in both Title I and non-Title I schools. Four percent of homeless liaisons reported that they do not have direct access to the use of their Title I set-aside funds.

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Objective 11: *The LEA ensures that preschool-age children experiencing homelessness are provided with resources to increase participation in quality early care and education programs that will improve their school readiness and increase their success in school and beyond.*

Homeless liaisons successfully identified over two thousand 0–5-year-old qualifying siblings who are not enrolled in school. While there has been an increase in collaborations with local early education agencies, and referrals are being made, six percent of the homeless liaisons reported not collaborating or making referrals for their early learners.

Objective 12: *Unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) are provided with services under the McKinney-Vento Act and linked to services within the LEA and community to meet their needs.*

Over three thousand unaccompanied homeless youth were reported to have been identified during the 2024-2025SY and were informed of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act. Only two percent of homeless liaisons reported that they did not feel that they were successfully identifying all unaccompanied homeless youth in their district. One hundred percent of the homeless liaisons shared that all unaccompanied homeless youth in their district have equal access to public education, including immediate enrollment. Homeless liaisons are completing the FAFSA verification form in eighty-one percent of the districts, while the remainder reported staff members such as school counselors, school administrators, data managers, and appointed designees as completing the form.

Objective 13: *The LEA provides academic support to enable students experiencing homelessness to go beyond high school with the skills needed to be successful.*

It was reported that across the state, students experiencing homelessness are being provided with the support to ensure they have access to educational opportunities, financial aid guidance, college readiness, military connectedness, and career preparedness to successfully pursue any of the three pathways: enroll, enlist, or employ.

Objective 14: *Career and technical education (CTE) programs offer students the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to compete for well-paying, in-demand jobs in fields such as healthcare, agriculture, and technology. The LEA ensures educational access and provides opportunities for your students experiencing homelessness to participate and enroll in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and activities by meeting with the LEA's CTE Director and/or designee.*

Thirty percent of homeless liaisons reported meeting monthly or more with their CTE Director to ensure that students who are experiencing homelessness have access and opportunities to enroll and participate in the CTE courses. Quarterly, biannual, or annual meetings occur with the remainder of the homeless liaisons and CTE Directors in the state.

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Objective 15: *The LEA ensures that students experiencing homelessness who meet the relative eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing and participating in extracurricular activities.*

Homeless liaisons reported that school staff and coaches understand the rights of students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act regarding participation in athletics. Financial assistance is provided to ensure this participation. Four percent of homeless liaisons reported that students are not provided with transportation when needed to participate in a school-administered extracurricular activity.

Objective 16: *Students identified in historically underserved populations, such as migrant and LGBTQIA+, and experiencing homelessness, receive the resources and support necessary for academic success.*

All homeless liaisons reported being aware of the Migrant Education Program in their LEA and working collaboratively and consistently to ensure that migrant students who qualify as experiencing homelessness have no barriers to their educational opportunities despite their transient circumstances. Twenty percent of homeless liaisons shared that they are not receiving ongoing professional development on LGBTQIA+ youth inclusivity and best practices.

Objective 17: *The LEA and local homeless service providers collaborate to work toward ending homelessness and reducing its effects on the lives of children and youth.*

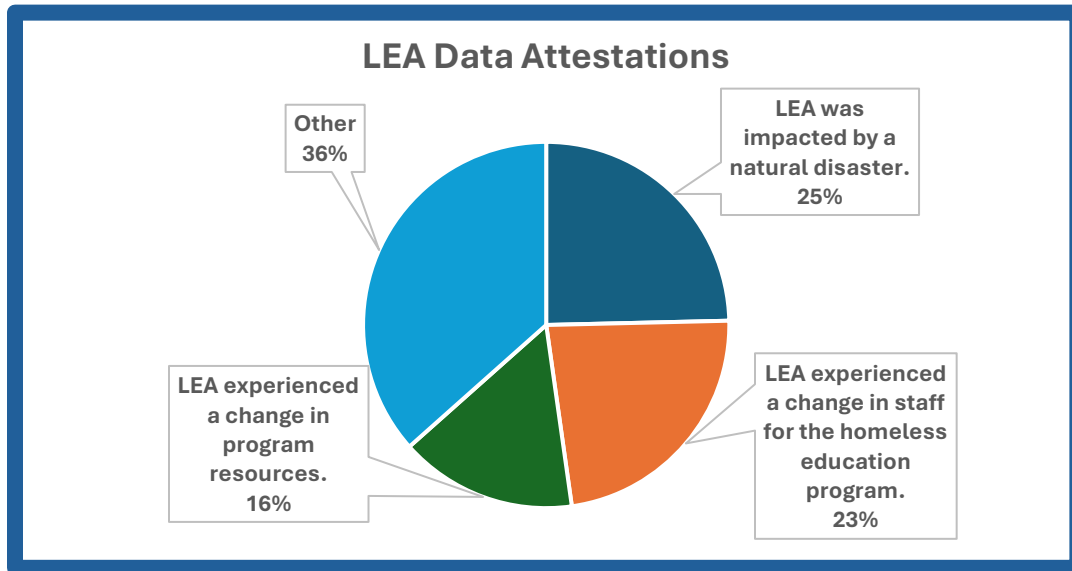
Homeless liaisons were asked to report on their participation/collaboration with the local Point in Time (PIT) Count, NC Balance of State, or the local Continuum of Care (CoC), and the local Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office. More homeless liaisons reported participating in the local PIT count than working with their CoC or HUD office. Thirty-three percent marked unsure or N/A for working with their CoC. Some examples of reasons for not collaborating were limited housing partners, working with other agencies such as DSS, which works directly with housing, and working directly with their shelter partners instead.

Objective 18: *LEAs are required to collect and report data on the number of students experiencing homelessness.*

Over thirty thousand students were reported as experiencing homelessness during the 2024-2025SY. Seventy-one LEAs reported having a 10% or more increase in their identifications. The chart below represents data attestations that were provided by the homeless liaisons in the districts.

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A shortage of affordable housing, high turnover, and staff reductions, as well as LEAs experiencing a loss in the total number of students attending the local school district, are all reasons provided for the increase or decrease in the identification totals in the “Other” category.

Objective 19: *The homeless liaison uses the homeless education program data to assess the educational development of students experiencing homelessness. The data also guides the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act in the homeless education program to improve student outcomes.*

Homeless liaisons reported using a variety of data points to assess the educational development of their students who are experiencing homelessness. Unaccompanied homeless youth, 0-5-year-old qualifying siblings who are not enrolled in school, and chronic absenteeism were the data points analyzed most often. With identified students receiving credit accrual or academic tutoring, and the identified students who participate in CTE programs being the data analyzed the least. One hundred percent of homeless liaisons reported sharing this data internally with their social school workers and school counselors, followed by their Federal Program Director, Superintendent, and building administrators. It is noted that this data is being shared internally, mostly monthly or annually. While data is reported to be shared externally with many community stakeholders, faith-based partners, and shelters/transitional partners seems to be where homeless education data is shared the most on an annual basis. Data is being shared through training, webinars, and professional development, as well as on district websites.

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Objective 20: *The McKinney-Vento Act requires LEAs to designate a homeless liaison to carry out the required duties outlined in the law. The homeless liaison must have the time and capacity to fulfill these duties.*

Seven percent of the 115 homeless liaisons reported being solely in the role of homeless liaison. While sixty-five percent also reported being in the role of Foster Care Point of Contact. Thirty-nine percent reported being the Student Service Director, as well as homeless liaison. The majority of homeless liaisons are twelve-month employees and feel that they have adequate time and capacity to fulfill the required duties outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act.

Additional comments: *Homeless liaisons were asked to provide any additional comments. The following comment best summed up the array of responses received.*

“The NCHPEP Team is a valuable resource as we continue this work! NCHPEP Team members quickly respond when questions arise, and the training and support you give are informative and helpful. Implementing the mentor/mentee program is a significant accomplishment that should provide new liaisons with additional support, as this work can be overwhelming for someone new in the role. Working on the NCHPEP Leadership Team has allowed me to develop collaborative working relationships that I value across the state of North Carolina. I encourage liaisons to reach out and ask questions when they are unsure, due to the professionalism with which you all respond to our needs. Leaders at NCHPEP have helped me grow as a leader myself, and I am grateful to each of you for the work you do for children across the NC and the nation!”

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