



## ADVOCACY ALERT:

# Funding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

### TOP-LEVEL SUMMARY: What is YOTO advocating for and why?

- YOTO wants continued funding of the McKinney-Vento Act / Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program. The current federal budget proposal eliminates dedicated funding for McKinney Vento.
- If funding is eliminated, youth experiencing homelessness will lose three things:
  - Transportation assistance to remain in their original school regardless of housing instability.
  - The ability to enroll in school without their vital documents which are often lost or with birth parents.
  - The support of a McKinney-Vento liaison who identifies and enrolls youth in McKinney-Vento and links youth to community resources.
- Local impact: Over 2,800 homeless youth in Pima County will immediately lose support to stay in school. National impact: 1.4 million homeless youth will be impacted!
- Increased barriers to attending school makes homeless youth more vulnerable to harm and exploitation. It also deprives them of an education, which is the most powerful tool for escaping poverty and avoiding homelessness as an adult.
- The total funding at risk is \$129M. This is less than one half of one percent (0.05%) of spending for the Department of Education.
- **CALL TO ACTION:** We want people to contact their federal elected officials and tell them that the federal budget MUST include dedicated funding for McKinney-Vento and the EHCY program.

### BACKGROUND INFO

#### 1) What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

- It is a federal law:
  - Enacted in **1987**;
  - With **bipartisan** support;
  - Whose **chief sponsor was a Republican** representative (Stewart McKinney);
  - And was **signed into law by a Republican** president (Ronald Reagan).
- It **provides a federal definition** for homelessness - “lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” – and provides examples of youth who would fall under the definition.

#### 2) What does the McKinney-Vento Act do for youth?

- It establishes the **Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY)** program, which provides basic access to education for youth experiencing homelessness.
- The EHCY program is **the only federal program** specifically dedicated to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend and succeed in school.

**3) Specifically, what does the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program do?**

- Funds school staff members (**McKinney-Vento liaisons**) who identify, enroll, and support homeless youth, connecting them with community resources;
- Funds **transportation assistance** to incentivize consistent school attendance;
- Ensures that **youth can remain in their school**, even after moving outside its attendance boundaries;
- **Allows youth to enroll in school without typically required documentation**, which is often lost or unavailable due to frequent moves.

**4) How much does the EHCY program cost?**

- In 2024, the federal government spent a total of \$6.8 trillion. Only 4% of the federal budget (\$268 billion) went to the Department of Education.
- Within the Department of Education budget, congress appropriated **\$129 million** for the EHCY program in 2024.
- This is **less than one half of one percent** (0.05%) of spending for the Department of Education.

**5) What is the impact of the EHCY program?**

- About **one in five school districts** in the US receives dedicated funding.
- Nearly **1.4 million children and youth** are supported by this program across the country.

**6) What is the LOCAL impact of the EHCY program?**

- Arizona receives **\$2.38 million annually** through the program.
- **60** of the state's 685 school districts (8.8%) receive EHCY funding. In Pima County, this includes the TUSD, Sunnyside, Marana, Flowing Wells, Vail, and Amphitheater school districts.
- **19,365** homeless youth have been identified in Arizona through the program.
- **2,842** youth were identified in Pima County alone, **504** of whom are unaccompanied (experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian).

**7) What does the proposed federal budget do to the McKinney-Vento Act and the EHCY program?**

- The budget **entirely eliminates dedicated funding** for the EHCY program.
- In theory, schools could choose to find some funding for homeless students through a newly created block grant, but there would be **no requirement to do so**.
- As we saw with previous pandemic recovery funding, states and school districts typically do not direct resources toward homeless students unless dedicated funding is set aside for this purpose.