



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE EDUCATION OF  
HOMELESS CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH

*Building Futures Through Education*

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT – FEBRUARY 2, 2010** **INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE MCKINNEY-VENTO** **EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM**

**BACKGROUND:** On Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, President Obama unveiled his FY2011 budget proposal. The President's request includes \$65 million for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, which is the same funding level as the past two fiscal years.

The proposed funding level of \$65 million is particularly inadequate in light of the recent surge in family and youth homelessness, and the EHCY program's unique ability to assist homeless children and youth. The President has requested a historic investment in education - a \$3.5 billion increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Education's discretionary programs. Yet without specific, targeted assistance, homeless children and youth are unlikely to benefit from these reforms. The most promising instructional strategy or academic program will be of little benefit to children and youth who cannot get to school, or who are constantly changing schools due to the instability of their homeless situation. In these times of unprecedented homelessness and limited resources, failure to target federal dollars to serve those children and youth who are suffering is not only fiscally irresponsible, but sets them on a path for academic and economic failure.

**NEXT STEPS:** The President's budget request marks only the beginning of the process for determining FY2011 funding; Congress ultimately makes the final budget decisions. **There are many opportunities to influence the funding level for the EHCY program, but the best way is for Members of Congress to hear from you.** The Congressional appropriations process takes many months to complete. However, many of the most important decisions occur in early spring. Therefore, it is imperative to communicate with Congressional offices soon, and often, throughout the entire process.

**FUNDING LEVEL REQUESTED:** In light of the recent stimulus dollars, the President's proposed \$65 million represents a cut to current year funding for homeless education. Therefore, Congress should appropriate at least \$140 million in EHCY funding for FY2011. A funding level of \$140 million would include the program's fully authorized amount of \$70 million, plus the ARRA homeless education funding of \$70 million. The need for this funding level is more than justified given the increases in homelessness due the recession, and pre-recession needs.

### **ACTION NEEDED:**

1. Please write and/or visit your U.S. Senators and ask them to urge Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) to include at least \$140 million for the McKinney-Vento homeless education program in the FY2011 education appropriations bill. Contact information for U.S. Senators may be found at <http://www.senate.gov>. A sample letter is below.
2. Please write and/or visit your U.S. Representative and ask him or her to urge Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman David Obey (D-7<sup>th</sup>/WI) to include at least \$140 million for the McKinney-Vento homeless education program in the FY2011 education appropriations bill. Contact information for U.S. Representatives may be found at <http://www.house.gov>. A sample letter is below.
3. Please distribute this alert to as many partner organizations as possible, and urge them to join this effort
4. If you are a school district homeless liaison, please fill out NAEHCY's online survey about funding needs at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Jan2010LocalLiaisonARRA>. This data will help us make the case for more funding for FY2011.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Barbara Duffield, 202.364.7392, [bduffield@naehcy.org](mailto:bduffield@naehcy.org)

**SAMPLE LETTER TO U.S. SENATORS ON FY2011 EHCY FUNDING  
PREPARE ON ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD IF POSSIBLE**

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]  
U.S. Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator [Last Name]:

I am writing to ask that you urge Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) to include at least \$140 million for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program in the FY2011 education appropriations bill.

In the face of one of the worst economic crises our nation has faced, homelessness is affecting unprecedented numbers of children and youth. During the 2007-2008 school year, school districts reported a 17 percent increase in homeless students over the prior year. Last year, this trend continued; according to a national survey, one in five responding school districts reported having more homeless children and youth in the fall of 2008 than over the course of the entire 2007-2008 school year. [ADD LOCAL AND STATE TRENDS HERE]

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program removes barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. School districts use these funds for outreach and identification, enrollment assistance, transportation assistance, school records transfer, immunization referrals, tutoring, counseling, school supplies, assessment, professional development for educators, and referrals for community services targeted to homeless students. [ADD LOCAL OR STATE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES HERE.]

Yet federal funding has not kept up with needs. Congress appropriated \$65 million for EHCY in FY2009 and also in FY2010. In the 2007-2008 school year, this funding level left more than 300,000 identified homeless children and youth without direct services. While the stimulus package included \$70 million in EHCY funding to respond to the economic crisis, funding remains gravely insufficient. [ADD LOCAL STATEMENT OF NEED HERE.]

Without specific, targeted assistance, homeless children and youth are unlikely to benefit from any investment in education. The most promising instructional strategy or academic program will be of little benefit to children and youth who cannot get to school, or who are constantly changing schools due to the instability of their homeless situation. An appropriation of at least \$140 million for the EHCY is needed to ensure that school districts can continue to identify and assist children and youth experiencing homelessness. Without an education, these children and youth unlikely to obtain the skills they need to avoid poverty and homelessness as adults.

Thank you for leadership on behalf of all of [your city or state's] homeless children, youth, and families. I look forward to your response.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO U.S. REPRESENTATIVES ON FY2011 EHCY FUNDING  
PREPARE ON ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD IF POSSIBLE**

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative [Last Name]:

I am writing to ask that you urge House Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman David Obey (D-7<sup>th</sup>/WI) to include at least \$140 million for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program in the FY2011 education appropriations bill.

In the face of one of the worst economic crises our nation has faced, homelessness is affecting unprecedented numbers of children and youth. During the 2007-2008 school year, school districts reported a 17 percent increase in homeless students over the prior year. Last year, this trend continued; according to a national survey, one in five responding school districts reported having more homeless children and youth in the fall of 2008 than over the course of the entire 2007-2008 school year. [ADD LOCAL AND STATE TRENDS HERE]

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program removes barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. School districts use these funds for outreach and identification, enrollment assistance, transportation assistance, school records transfer, immunization referrals, tutoring, counseling, school supplies, assessment, professional development for educators, and referrals for community services targeted to homeless students. [ADD LOCAL OR STATE PROGRAM ACTIVITES HERE.]

Yet federal funding has not kept up with needs. Congress appropriated \$65 million for EHCY in FY2009 and also in FY2010. In the 2007-2008 school year, this funding level left more than 300,000 identified homeless children and youth without direct services. While the stimulus package included \$70 million in EHCY funding to respond to the economic crisis, funding remains gravely insufficient. [ADD STATEMENT/DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL/STATE NEED HERE.]

Without specific, targeted assistance, homeless children and youth are unlikely to benefit from any investment in education. The most promising instructional strategy or academic program will be of little benefit to children and youth who cannot get to school, or who are constantly changing schools due to the instability of their homeless situation. An appropriation of at least \$140 million for the EHCY is needed to ensure that school districts can continue to identify and assist children and youth experiencing homelessness. Without an education, these children and youth unlikely to obtain the skills they need to avoid poverty and homelessness as adults.

Thank you for leadership on behalf of all of [your city or state's] homeless children, youth, and families. I look forward to your response.