



Washington's Homeless Student Population Grew by 30% in 3 Years

- In the 2014–15 school year, Washington had 1,073,638 students enrolled in 302 school districts (local education agencies).
- That year, there were 35,511 homeless students in the state, making up 3.3% of total enrollment.
- Washington had the 8th highest number of homeless students and the 9th highest rate of student homelessness in the U.S.
- School districts with the highest rates of student homelessness were **Orondo** (55%) and **Dixie** (43%), both of which contain a single public school each.

FIGURE 1

Number of Homeless Students and Percent Living Doubled Up

By School District, SY 2014–15

The U.S. Department of Education's definition of homelessness includes students who are "doubled up," or have no option but to stay with others in overcrowded, often unsafe living conditions.

Statewide

Total homeless students:

35,511

Percent of homeless students doubled up:

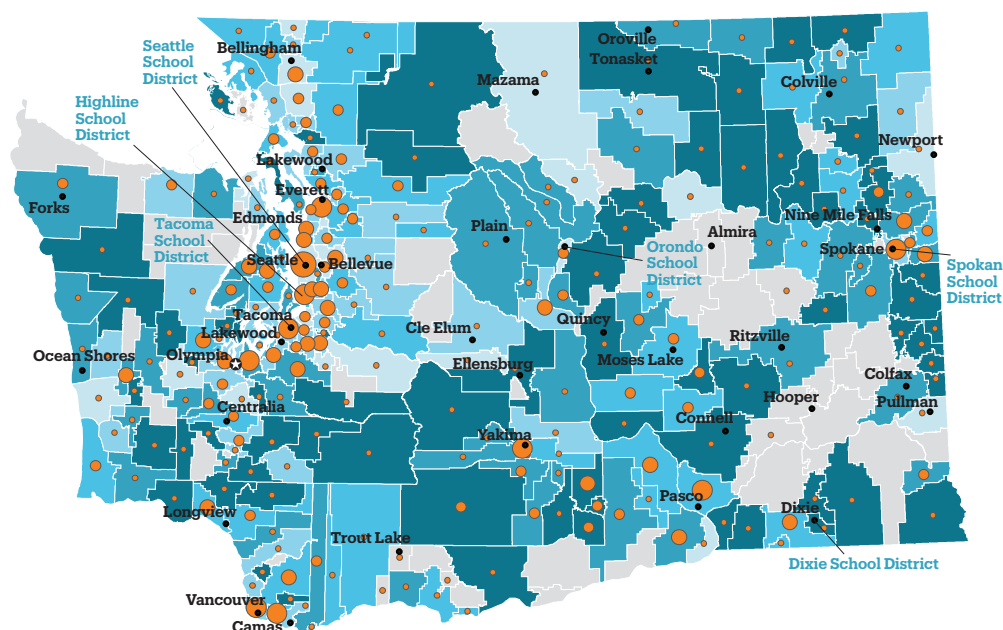
73%

Total Homeless Students

- 3–97
- 98–272
- 273–600
- 601–1,616
- 1,617–2,944

Percent of Homeless Students Living Doubled Up

- 29.4%–57.8%
- 57.9%–71.9%
- 72.0%–82.0%
- 82.1%–92.3%
- 92.4%–100.0%
- Fewer Than 3 Homeless Students/Data Unavailable



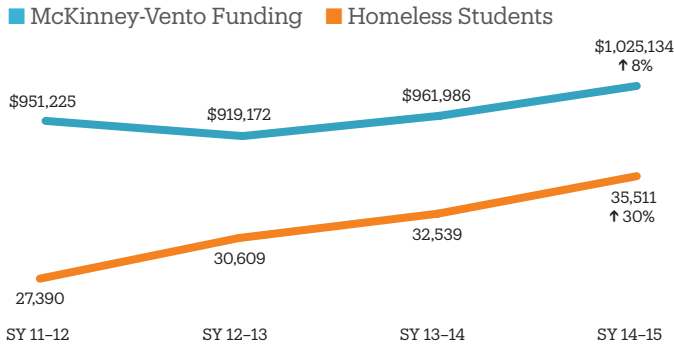
- Four school districts had over 1,000 homeless students (**Seattle Public Schools, Tacoma, Spokane, and Highline**). In ten school districts, over 20% of students were homeless.
- In 69 school districts, over 93% of homeless students were sleeping in a doubled-up living arrangement. Two school districts had over 1,000 homeless students living doubled up (**Seattle Public Schools and Tacoma School District**).

FIGURE 2

McKinney-Vento Funding and Number of Homeless Students

SY 2011-12 to SY 2014-15

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, established by McKinney-Vento, is the primary source of federal funding for homeless students in elementary and secondary school.



- Since SY 2011-12, Washington's McKinney-Vento funding increased 8%, to \$1,025,134. Over the same period, the number of homeless students rose 30%, to 35,511. Washington had the 9th highest rate of growth in student homelessness nationwide during that time.
- On average, Washington received \$28.87 per homeless student in SY 2014-15, down from \$34.73 in SY 2011-12 (a decrease of 17%). Nationally, the per-student average for SY 2014-15 was \$50.08.

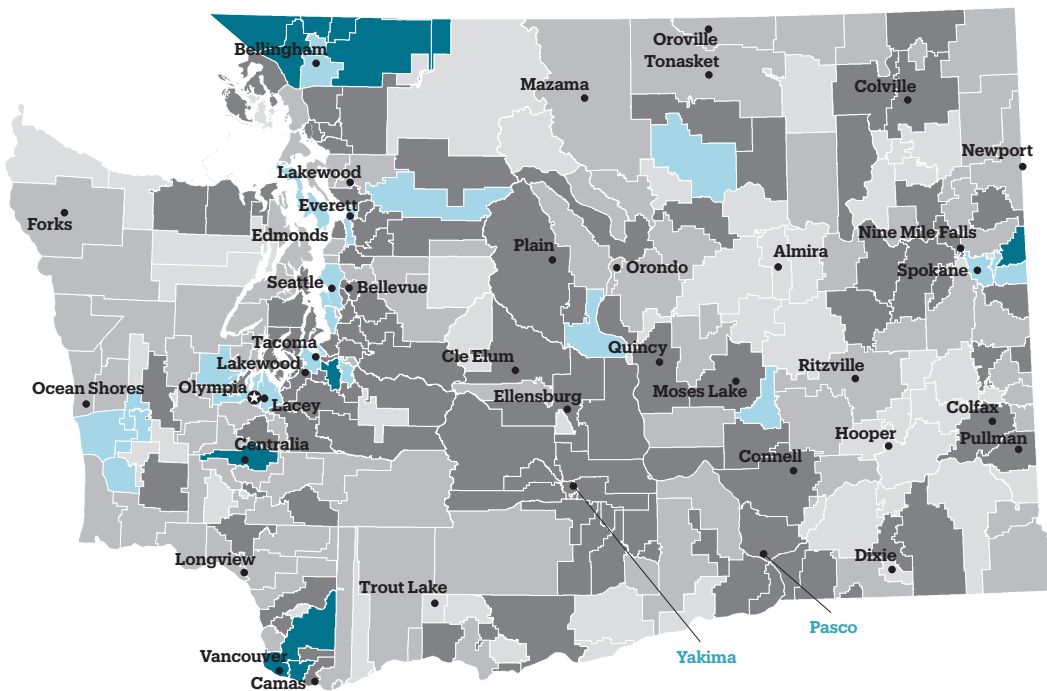
Source: U.S. Department of Education, State Funding History Tables by Program, *Education Department Budget History State Tables, FY 1980-2014*; National Center for Homeless Education, *Federal Data Summary School Years 2011-12 to 2013-14 Education for Homeless Children and Youth*, November 2015; National Center for Homeless Education, *Federal Data Summary School Years 2012-13 to 2014-15 Education for Homeless Children and Youth*, December 2016.

FIGURE 3

School Districts Potentially Under-Identifying Homeless Students

By School District, SY 2014-15

School districts with lower ratios of homeless students to free-lunch eligible students are likely under-identifying those not in shelter.



Statewide

Number of districts:

302

Number of districts that received a subgrant:

34

Percent of districts that received a subgrant:

11%

Number of homeless students:

35,511

Number of students eligible for free lunch:

415,018

Ratio of homeless students to free-lunch eligible students:

8.6%

Received Subgrant

Ratio of Homeless Students to Free-Lunch Eligible Students

- Below State Average (<8.6%)
- Above State Average (>8.6%)

Did Not Receive Subgrant

Ratio of Homeless Students to Free-Lunch Eligible Students

- Below State Average (<8.6%)
- Above State Average (>8.6%)

■ Data Unavailable

- Eleven percent of Washington's school districts received McKinney-Vento subgrants, and 43% of the state's homeless students lived in a district with a subgrant. Non-grantee districts with the most homeless students included **Yakima** and **Pasco School Districts**.
- In Washington, 51% of school districts had a ratio of homeless students to free-lunch eligible students smaller than the statewide average (8.6%), including 11 (or 32% of 34 districts) that received subgrants.

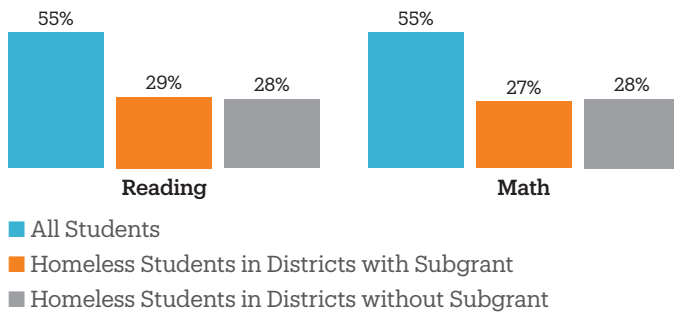
Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Homeless Student Enrollment Data by Local Educational Agency School Year 2014-15*; National Center for Education Statistics, *Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey Directory Data, SY 2014-15*; National Center for Education Statistics, *Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Free Lunch Data, SY 2014-15*.

FIGURE 4

Proficiency in 4th Grade Reading and Math

SY 2014-15

Student performance in early grades is a strong predictor of high school graduation.



■ **Statewide:** On average, homeless students were proficient in reading at a rate 26–27 percentage points lower than all students. In math, homeless students were proficient at rates 27–28 percentage points lower than all students.

■ **A closer look:** Across all grades, **Bellevue School District**, located east of Seattle, had the largest achievement gap between all students and homeless students. In math, the percentage of all students who were proficient was 75%, while 20–24% of homeless students were proficient. In reading, 77% of all students were proficient, and just 25–29% of homeless students scored proficiently.

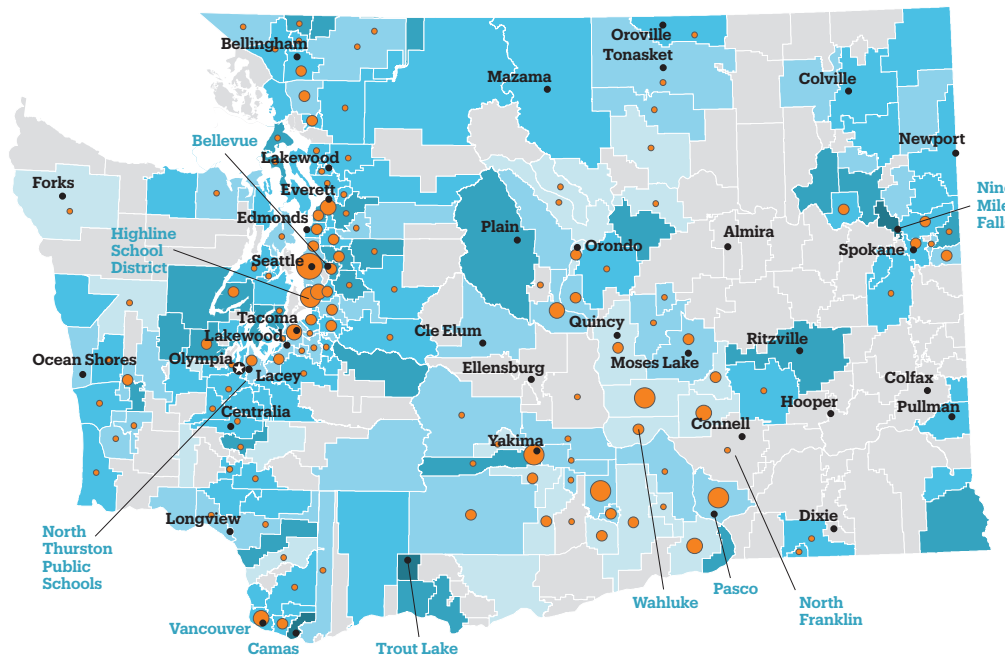
Source: U.S. Department of Education, ED Data Express, SY 2014-15; U.S. Department of Education, *State Assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics School Year 2014-15*.

FIGURE 5

Homeless Students with Additional Support Needs

By School District, SY 2014-15

Students with disabilities or limited English proficiency may have difficulty accessing additional support services if they are homeless.



Statewide

Number of homeless students with disabilities:

7,301

Percent of homeless students with disabilities:

21%

Percent of all students with disabilities:

12%

Number of homeless students with limited English proficiency:

5,138

Percent of homeless students with limited English proficiency:

14%

Percent of all students with limited English proficiency:

10%

Number of Homeless Students with Limited English Proficiency

- 3-29
- 30-79
- 80-156
- 157-264
- 265-567

Percent of Homeless Students with Disabilities

- 6.8%–14.6%
- 14.7%–20.6%
- 20.7%–27.0%
- 27.1%–37.5%
- 37.6%–50.0%
- Fewer Than 3 Homeless Students/Data Unavailable

■ In three school districts, over 40% of homeless students were identified as having a disability (**Nine Mile Falls**, **Camas**, and **Trout Lake**). The average rate for districts with any homeless students was 20%, almost double the rate for all students.

■ In **North Franklin** and **Wahluke School Districts**, over 70% of all homeless students had limited English proficiency. This is seven times the rate of limited proficiency for all students and five times the rate for homeless students.

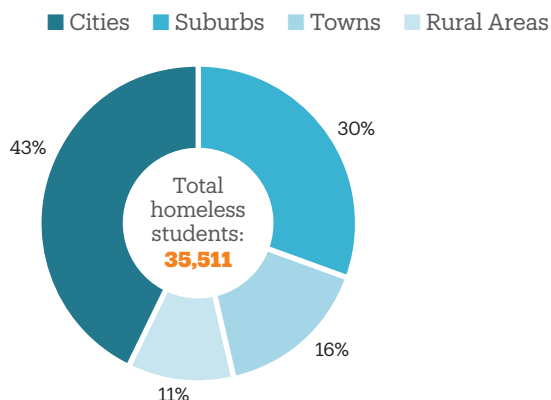
Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Homeless Student Enrollment Data by Local Educational Agency School Year 2014-15*.

FIGURE 6

Where Homeless Students Live, by Population Density

SY 2014–15

Families in rural areas or small towns often have fewer shelters or services to turn to for assistance.



- In Washington, 43% of homeless students lived in urban school districts. Among districts in suburbs, four districts had over 700 homeless students (**Highline, Vancouver, North Thurston Public Schools, and Pasco**).
- Homeless students were spread proportionately between Washington’s cities, suburbs, towns, and rural areas. Seventy-three percent of homeless students lived in cities and suburbs, only slightly less than the 79% of all students in these areas.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Homeless Student Enrollment Data by Local Educational Agency School Year 2014–15*; National Center for Education Statistics, *Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates (EDGE) Program, Geographic Indicators and Identifiers 2014–2015*.

Homeless students are too often overlooked by policymakers when talking about education policy. Improving outcomes and supports for homeless students reduces the burden on teachers, parents, and schools who struggle to help students cope with the trauma of homelessness along with the challenges of poverty.

Questions for educators and state/local legislators to consider:

- Do you know how many homeless children live in your town? In your state?
- Is your school district a McKinney-Vento grantee? How much funding does it receive? How is it used?
- What supports are being provided to help homeless children toward better educational outcomes?
- Are the challenges that homeless students face, such as chronic absenteeism and difficulty traveling to and from school, being addressed?
- Are the educational needs specific to homeless students being identified?
- Does your public school have a dedicated liaison whose priority and focus is the needs of homeless students?
- Do schools coordinate with the shelter system or service delivery system?
- Are homeless students being granted access to services to which they are entitled (e.g. transportation, tutoring, special education, health care, food)?

This snapshot is part of a series analyzing student homelessness in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Visit www.ICPHusa.org for more information. Data tables for the figures seen here will be available at www.ICPHusa.org starting in July 2017.

Source Notes

• Washington’s local education agencies include specialized state agencies that cannot be mapped but are included in all other data analysis. • Unless otherwise noted, statewide data is from National Center for Homeless Education, *Federal Data Summary School Years 2012–13 to 2014–15 Education for Homeless Children and Youth*, December 2016; National Center for Homeless Education, “Washington,” <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=56>; U.S. Department of Education, *ED Data Express, SY 2014–15*. • The McKinney-Vento definition of “doubled up” refers to children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

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ICPH is an independent, New York City-based public policy organization that works on the issues of family homelessness and poverty.

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