

2022 | National Center for Homeless Education



# **Student Homelessness in America**

School Years 2018-19 to 2020-21

# Student Homelessness in America: School Years 2018-19 to 2020-21

National Center for Homeless Education  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO



With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro provides critical information to those who seek to remove educational barriers and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

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# Student Homelessness in America

## Overview

The purpose of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) is to ensure that students who experience homelessness have access to the education and other services they need to succeed academically. Each year, states submit information regarding the education of students who experienced homelessness to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as a part of the ED*Facts* Initiative. Using the most recently available data, this brief examines the number of students who experienced homelessness, the type of housing they used when first identified by school districts, and subgroups of students who experienced homelessness. This report presents state and national totals with longitudinal comparisons. While the primary audiences for this report are state coordinators and local school district liaisons, the information in this report may be of interest to other administrators, policymakers, educators, and service providers.

Key findings in this brief include the following:

### **Enrollment Totals and Trends for Students Who Experienced Homelessness**

- During School Year (SY) 2020-21, public schools identified 1,099,221 students who experienced homelessness. This represents 2.2% of all students enrolled in public schools (NCES, 2021).
- The total number of students who experienced homelessness in SY 2020-21 represents a 14% decrease from SY 2019-20 and a 21% decrease from SY 2018-19.
- Between SYs 2004-05 and 2020-21, the number of students who experienced homelessness increased by 63%. The number of students identified as homeless increased by an average of 4% annually during that same period of time.

### **Primary Nighttime Residence of Homeless Children and Youth at the Point of Identification**

- The number of students who experienced homelessness was fairly evenly distributed across the grades, with 7% to 8% of homeless students enrolled in each grade starting with kindergarten. Grade 11 students and students who were aged three- to five-years old but not enrolled in kindergarten are exceptions at 6% and 3% respectively. The split of students across grades has remained stable since SY 2013-14 (NCHE, 2017-2021).

### **Demographic Subgroups of Students Who Experienced Homelessness**

- Students with disabilities and English learners accounted for the largest two subgroups of students who experienced homelessness. These subgroups of students are also disproportionately represented among students who experienced homelessness. In the general population the percentage of students with

disabilities is 15% and English learners is 10%, whereas 20% of students who experienced homeless were students with disabilities and 18% of students who experienced homelessness were English learners.

#### **Race and Ethnicity of Students Who Experienced Homelessness**

- The largest subgroups of students by race and ethnicity included Hispanic or Latino students at 39%, White students at 26%, and Black or African American students at 24%. Data for other race and ethnicity subgroups showed students with two or more races at 5%, Asian students at 2%, American Indian or Native Alaskan students at almost 2% and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students at less than 1%. With the exception of students who identified as Asian, students who experienced homelessness were disproportionately students of color when compared to the overall student body.

# Students Experiencing Homelessness and Educational Rights

The McKinney-Vento Act defines a student experiencing homelessness as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (42 U.S.C. Section 11434(a)(2), 2015). The McKinney-Vento Act requires public school districts to appoint a liaison to ensure the identification of students experiencing homelessness in coordination with other school personnel and community agencies (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(i)). It also outlines circumstances that fall under the definition of homelessness. While the list of circumstances described in the McKinney-Vento Act is not exhaustive, it helps liaisons determine which students are eligible for services under the law. Circumstances which meet the criteria of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence include:

- shared housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative, adequate housing;
- emergency or transitional shelters;
- public or private places not designed for humans to live; and
- cars, parks, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing.

The definition also includes migratory students who are living in a situation that meets the homeless definition criteria (42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(2)). Children and youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian are also eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act as unaccompanied youth if their housing meets the criteria for homelessness (42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)).

Once identified, students have the right to remain in their schools of origin or enroll in the local school where they are staying based on the student's best interest, receive transportation to the school of origin, receive free school meals, and receive educational and related supports under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 2015). The McKinney-Vento Act provides grants to state educational agencies, which make competitive subgrants to school districts to provide educationally related support services to students experiencing homelessness.

## Student Enrollment by State

States identified 1,099,221 students who experienced homeless during SY 2020-21. When compared to the overall number of students enrolled in public schools, students who experienced homeless accounted for 2.2% of enrolled students (NCES, 2022). The Bureau of Indian Education, the District of Columbia, and New York had the highest rates of students who experienced homelessness at 6% for the Bureau of Indian Education and the District of Columbia and 5% for New York. Connecticut, Rhode Island, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico had the lowest rates; schools in these states identified less than 1% of students as living in homeless situations.

**Table 1. Number of enrolled students who experienced homelessness by state with percent of all students, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 12**

| State                            | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2018-19 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2018-19 | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2019-20 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2019-20 | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2020-21 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2020-21 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>United States<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>1,387,573</b>                                 | <b>2.7</b>                            | <b>1,280,886</b>                                 | <b>2.5</b>                            | <b>1,099,221</b>                                 | <b>2.2</b>                            |
| Alabama                          | 16,118                                           | 2.2                                   | 11,578                                           | 1.6                                   | 9,365                                            | 1.3                                   |
| Alaska                           | 3,576                                            | 2.7                                   | 3,126                                            | 2.4                                   | 2,578                                            | 2.0                                   |
| Arizona <sup>2</sup>             | 21,062                                           | 1.8                                   | 17,386                                           | 1.5                                   | 13,920                                           | 1.3                                   |
| Arkansas                         | 13,910                                           | 2.8                                   | 13,339                                           | 2.7                                   | 11,871                                           | 2.4                                   |
| Bureau of Indian Education       | 1,231                                            | 2.8                                   | 2,373                                            | 6.2                                   | 2,202                                            | 6.3                                   |
| California                       | 271,528                                          | 4.3                                   | 246,350                                          | 4.0                                   | 227,612                                          | 3.8                                   |
| Colorado                         | 21,560                                           | 2.4                                   | 20,821                                           | 2.3                                   | 15,176                                           | 1.7                                   |
| Connecticut                      | 4,722                                            | 0.9                                   | 4,183                                            | 0.8                                   | 3,310                                            | 0.7                                   |
| Delaware                         | 3,547                                            | 2.6                                   | 2,709                                            | 1.9                                   | 2,576                                            | 1.9                                   |
| District of Columbia             | 6,858                                            | 7.7                                   | 6,332                                            | 7.0                                   | 5,026                                            | 5.6                                   |
| Florida                          | 91,068                                           | 3.2                                   | 79,357                                           | 2.8                                   | 62,971                                           | 2.3                                   |
| Georgia                          | 38,891                                           | 2.2                                   | 35,538                                           | 2.0                                   | 31,161                                           | 1.8                                   |
| Hawaii                           | 3,600                                            | 2.0                                   | 3,586                                            | 2.0                                   | 3,089                                            | 1.8                                   |
| Idaho                            | 7,810                                            | 2.5                                   | 7,835                                            | 2.5                                   | 7,358                                            | 2.4                                   |
| Illinois                         | 55,752                                           | 2.8                                   | 47,445                                           | 2.4                                   | 36,898                                           | 2.0                                   |
| Indiana                          | 18,252                                           | 1.7                                   | 17,324                                           | 1.6                                   | 15,376                                           | 1.5                                   |
| Iowa                             | 7,295                                            | 1.4                                   | 6,042                                            | 1.2                                   | 6,057                                            | 1.2                                   |
| Kansas                           | 8,369                                            | 1.7                                   | 7,650                                            | 1.5                                   | 5,632                                            | 1.2                                   |
| Kentucky                         | 24,177                                           | 3.6                                   | 21,620                                           | 3.1                                   | 18,697                                           | 2.8                                   |
| Louisiana                        | 17,330                                           | 2.4                                   | 15,533                                           | 2.2                                   | 11,768                                           | 1.7                                   |
| Maine                            | 2,552                                            | 1.4                                   | 2,302                                            | 1.3                                   | 2,142                                            | 1.2                                   |
| Maryland                         | 16,202                                           | 1.8                                   | 15,548                                           | 1.7                                   | 11,760                                           | 1.3                                   |
| Massachusetts                    | 24,658                                           | 2.6                                   | 22,648                                           | 2.4                                   | 19,954                                           | 2.2                                   |
| Michigan                         | 34,853                                           | 2.3                                   | 32,935                                           | 2.2                                   | 26,867                                           | 1.9                                   |
| Minnesota                        | 17,071                                           | 1.9                                   | 13,295                                           | 1.5                                   | 10,588                                           | 1.2                                   |
| Mississippi <sup>3</sup>         | 7,003                                            | 1.5                                   | 7,973                                            | 1.7                                   | 7,754                                            | 1.8                                   |
| Missouri                         | 34,029                                           | 3.7                                   | 34,942                                           | 3.8                                   | 32,674                                           | 3.7                                   |
| Montana                          | 4,216                                            | 2.8                                   | 4,265                                            | 2.8                                   | 4,670                                            | 3.2                                   |
| Nebraska                         | 4,375                                            | 1.3                                   | 4,084                                            | 1.2                                   | 2,549                                            | 0.8                                   |
| Nevada                           | 18,647                                           | 3.8                                   | 18,264                                           | 3.7                                   | 15,093                                           | 3.1                                   |
| New Hampshire                    | 4,021                                            | 2.3                                   | 3,518                                            | 2.0                                   | 3,109                                            | 1.8                                   |
| New Jersey                       | 13,929                                           | 1.0                                   | 12,741                                           | 0.9                                   | 10,539                                           | 0.8                                   |
| New Mexico                       | 11,588                                           | 3.5                                   | 9,033                                            | 2.7                                   | 8,135                                            | 2.6                                   |
| New York                         | 148,485                                          | 5.5                                   | 143,329                                          | 5.3                                   | 126,343                                          | 4.8                                   |
| North Carolina                   | 34,725                                           | 2.2                                   | 27,044                                           | 1.7                                   | 22,660                                           | 1.5                                   |
| North Dakota                     | 2,530                                            | 2.2                                   | 2,675                                            | 2.3                                   | 1,775                                            | 1.5                                   |
| Ohio                             | 32,780                                           | 1.9                                   | 30,060                                           | 1.8                                   | 24,699                                           | 1.5                                   |
| Oklahoma                         | 23,372                                           | 3.3                                   | 25,010                                           | 3.6                                   | 22,438                                           | 3.2                                   |

**Table 1. Number of enrolled students who experienced homelessness by state with percent of all students, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 12 cont'd.**

| State          | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2018-19 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2018-19 | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2019-20 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2019-20 | Students experiencing homelessness<br>SY 2020-21 | Percent of all students<br>SY 2020-21 |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Oregon         | 23,765                                           | 3.9                                   | 22,336                                           | 3.7                                   | 18,485                                           | 3.3                                   |
| Pennsylvania   | 31,822                                           | 1.8                                   | 31,876                                           | 1.8                                   | 27,235                                           | 1.6                                   |
| Puerto Rico    | 4,717                                            | 1.5                                   | 4,058                                            | 1.4                                   | 2,424                                            | 0.9                                   |
| Rhode Island   | 1,475                                            | 1.0                                   | 1,531                                            | 1.1                                   | 1,109                                            | 0.8                                   |
| South Carolina | 12,545                                           | 1.6                                   | 11,736                                           | 1.5                                   | 11,986                                           | 1.6                                   |
| South Dakota   | 1,907                                            | 1.4                                   | 2,015                                            | 1.4                                   | 1,561                                            | 1.1                                   |
| Tennessee      | 19,747                                           | 2.0                                   | 18,482                                           | 1.8                                   | 14,386                                           | 1.5                                   |
| Texas          | 114,055                                          | 2.1                                   | 111,411                                          | 2.0                                   | 93,096                                           | 1.7                                   |
| Utah           | 13,745                                           | 2.0                                   | 13,223                                           | 1.9                                   | 10,295                                           | 1.5                                   |
| Vermont        | 1,008                                            | 1.2                                   | 883                                              | 1.0                                   | 1,006                                            | 1.2                                   |
| Virginia       | 20,443                                           | 1.6                                   | 17,496                                           | 1.3                                   | 13,752                                           | 1.1                                   |
| Washington     | 39,972                                           | 3.6                                   | 36,685                                           | 3.2                                   | 32,931                                           | 3.0                                   |
| West Virginia  | 10,522                                           | 3.9                                   | 10,394                                           | 3.9                                   | 9,452                                            | 3.7                                   |
| Wisconsin      | 18,394                                           | 2.1                                   | 17,220                                           | 2.0                                   | 13,450                                           | 1.6                                   |
| Wyoming        | 1,764                                            | 1.9                                   | 1,747                                            | 1.8                                   | 1,661                                            | 1.8                                   |

<sup>1</sup>Enrolled students include those who were aged 3 through 5 but not in kindergarten, those enrolled in kindergarten through Grade 12, and those who are Ungraded.

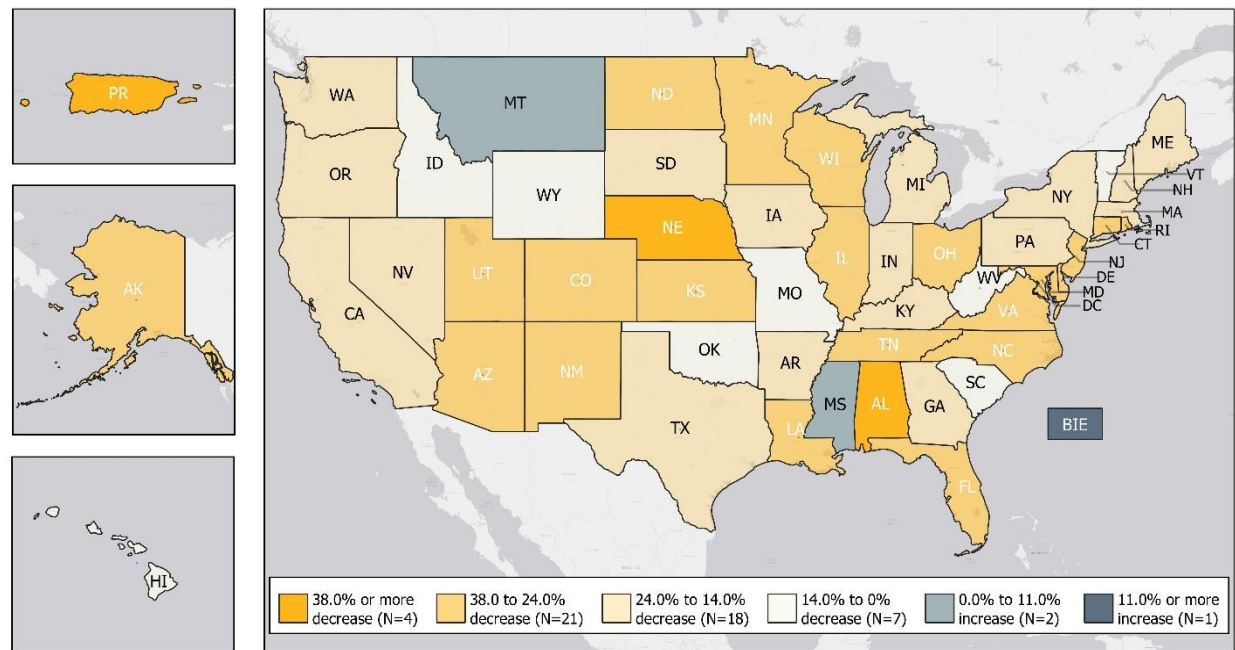
<sup>2</sup>Arizona allowed LEAs to include students in more than one grade, resulting in duplicate counts during SYs 2018-19 and 2019-20.

<sup>3</sup>Mississippi does not include data on students who were identified as homeless but declined assistance from the schools (SYs 2018-19 and 2019-20).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED*Facts* file specification 118, SEA Level (2020, 2021, 2022); National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, *State nonfiscal public elementary/secondary education survey* (2020-21 v. 1a), SEA level.

Figure 1 displays the change in the number of students who experienced homelessness between SYs 2018-19 and 2020-21. Overall, 49 states showed a decrease in the number of students identified as homeless in this three-year period. By comparison, 41 states showed a decrease during the previous three-year period (i.e., SYs 2015-16 to 2017-18). Only the Bureau of Indian Education, Mississippi, and Montana identified more students in SY 2020-21 than SY 2018-19. During the previous three-year period, nine states showed an increase in the number of identified students who experienced homelessness.

**Figure 1. Percent change in enrolled students who experienced homelessness by state, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 12**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EDData file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

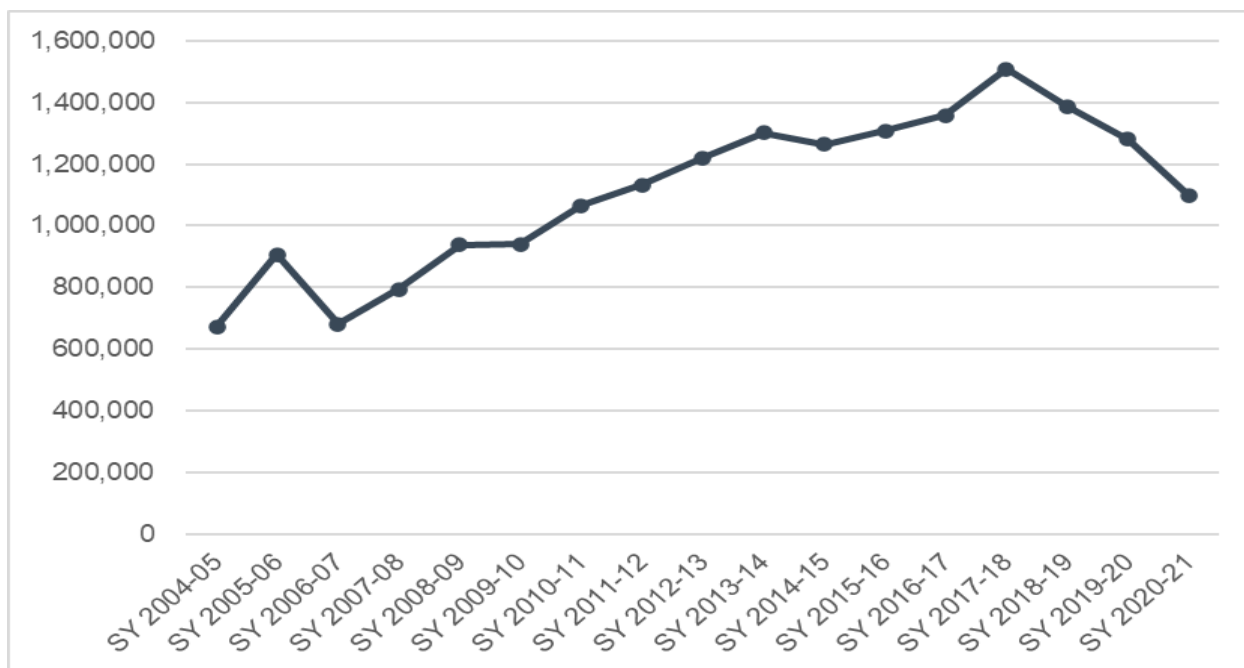
The total number of students who experienced homelessness in SY 2020-21 represents a 14% decrease from SY 2019-20 and a 21% decrease from SY 2018-19. However, various factors impact data on students who experienced homelessness, making it important to consider recent decreases within the context of longer-term trends. For example, states that experience major natural disasters such as hurricanes and flooding typically identify a larger number of students as homeless in the school year when the disaster occurs and a decrease the following year as students obtain housing. This pattern is evident in SYs 2005-06 and 2006-07, which were impacted by Hurricane Katrina, and again in SYs 2017-18 and 2018-19, which were impacted by several severe hurricanes.

Another factor that impacted data on students who experienced homelessness is the effect that COVID-19 had on the enrollment of students overall. The overall number of students enrolled in school districts also decreased. Overall student enrollment decreased from 51,041,158 students in SY 2019-20 to 49,668,082 students in SY 2020-21 (NCES, 2022). This nearly 3% decrease in the overall number of students enrolled in public school represents the largest single year decline in school enrollment since 1943 (Irwin et al., 2022). While both overall enrollment and the enrollment of students who were homeless decreased between SYs 2019-20 and 2020-21, the percentage of students who were homeless remained relatively steady at 2.5% of all students in SY 2019-20 and 2.2% of all students in SY 2020-21.

Data on the number of students who experienced homelessness were first collected in SY 2004-05. During the 17 years in which these data have been collected, counts of students who were homeless have increased steadily. The only exceptions were after particularly severe natural disasters and years in which a large state experienced

data collection challenges.<sup>1</sup> Between SYs 2004-05 and 2020-21, the number of students who experienced homelessness increased by 63%. The number of students identified as homeless increased by an average of 4% annually during that same period.

**Figure 2. Enrolled students who experienced homelessness by state, SYs 2004-05 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 12**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EDData file specification 118 (2006-2021), SEA level.

## Student Enrollment by Grade

Even as the number of students who experienced homelessness in a particular grade decreased, the percentage of homeless students enrolled in each grade remained stable. The number of students who experienced homelessness was fairly evenly distributed across the grades, with 7% to 8% of homeless students enrolled in each grade starting with kindergarten. Grade 11 students and students who were aged three- to five-years-old but not enrolled in kindergarten are exceptions at 6% and 3%, respectively. The split of students across grades has remained stable since at least SY 2013-14 (NCHE, 2017-2021).

<sup>1</sup> Hurricane Katrina was in August 2005. Hurricanes Maria, Harvey, Irma, Jose, and Nate all impacted the U.S. in the fall of 2017. Data collections were impacted in SYs 2009-10 and 2014-15.

**Table 2. Number and percent change in enrolled students who experienced homelessness by grade, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 12**

| Grade            | SY 2018-19       | SY 2019-20       | SY 2020-21       | Percent change<br>SYs 2018-19 to<br>2020-21 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>1,387,573</b> | <b>1,280,886</b> | <b>1,099,221</b> | <b>-20.8</b>                                |
| Age 3 through 5  | 46,673           | 51,170           | 30,241           | -35.2                                       |
| Kindergarten     | 114,366          | 98,673           | 79,227           | -30.7                                       |
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 111,825          | 101,289          | 86,564           | -22.6                                       |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 110,167          | 100,695          | 87,070           | -21.0                                       |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 112,458          | 100,548          | 86,694           | -22.9                                       |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 110,679          | 99,151           | 85,670           | -22.6                                       |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 108,631          | 98,709           | 84,969           | -21.8                                       |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 103,088          | 97,076           | 82,582           | -19.9                                       |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 96,127           | 91,151           | 80,542           | -16.2                                       |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 91,260           | 87,402           | 79,089           | -13.3                                       |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | 103,402          | 97,277           | 81,935           | -20.8                                       |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | 88,820           | 83,289           | 77,106           | -13.2                                       |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | 83,397           | 75,762           | 69,979           | -16.1                                       |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> | 103,408          | 95,580           | 85,001           | -17.8                                       |
| Ungraded         | 3,272            | 3,114            | 2,552            | -22.0                                       |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

## Student Counts by Primary Nighttime Residence

States report data for the type of primary nighttime residence used by students based on four categories: doubled-up, shelters and transitional housing, hotels or motels, and unsheltered. The *doubled-up* category includes students who are sharing housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. The *shelters and transitional housing* category includes all types of emergency and transitional shelters. The *hotels or motels* category includes students residing in hotels or motels due to a lack of alternative, adequate housing. The *unsheltered* category includes students who are staying in substandard housing, cars, parks, abandoned buildings, or other places not meant for humans to live. It also includes students staying in temporary trailers and campgrounds due to a lack of adequate, alternative housing. Over a three-year period, the percentage of homeless students living in a particular type of housing remained relatively stable between SYs 2018-19 and 2020-21. Seventy-seven percent of students who experienced homelessness lived in doubled-up situations, 11% lived in shelters/transitional housing, 8% stayed in hotels/motels, and 4% lived in unsheltered locations.

**Table 3. Number of enrolled students who experienced homelessness and percent change by primary nighttime residence, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**

| Residence                       | SY 2018-19 <sup>2</sup> | SY 2019-20 <sup>3</sup> | SY 2020-21 <sup>4</sup> | Percent change SYs 2018-19 to 2020-21 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>        | <b>1,387,573</b>        | <b>1,280,886</b>        | <b>1,099,221</b>        | <b>-20.3</b>                          |
| Doubled-up                      | 1,058,463               | 991,300                 | 844,245                 | -20.2                                 |
| Shelters & transitional housing | 167,634                 | 146,769                 | 119,934                 | -28.5                                 |
| Hotels/Motels                   | 97,640                  | 88,663                  | 85,422                  | -12.5                                 |
| Unsheltered                     | 55,306                  | 52,307                  | 49,475                  | -10.5                                 |
| Not Reported                    | 8,530                   | 1,847                   | 145                     | -98.3                                 |

<sup>1</sup>Enrolled students includes those who were aged 3 through 5 not in kindergarten, those enrolled in kindergarten through Grade 13, and those that were Ungraded. Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program.

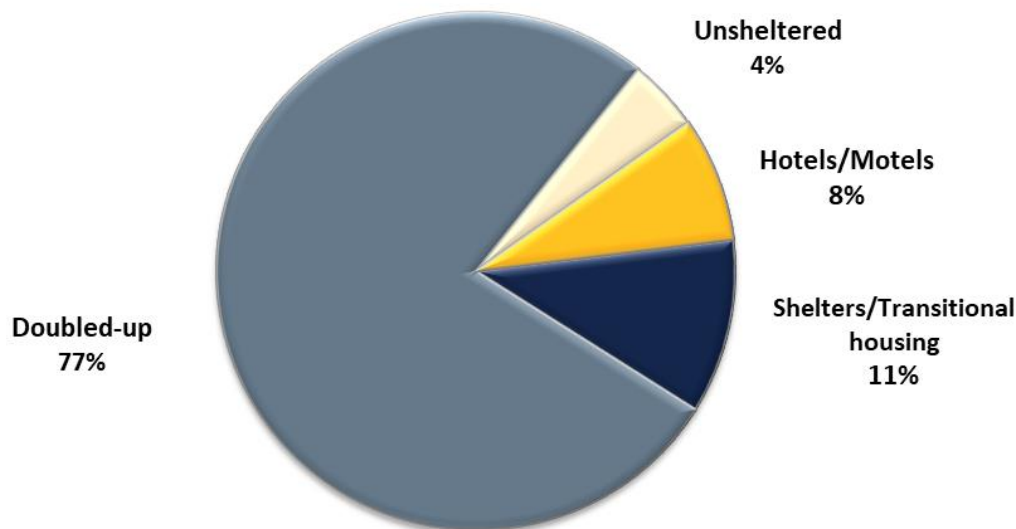
<sup>2</sup>Colorado included infants not enrolled in school. Hawaii, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Tennessee did not provide data for all students. Arizona, the District of Columbia, and Illinois did not provide data for all students.

<sup>3</sup>Arizona, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, and Wisconsin did not provide data for all students.

<sup>4</sup>Arizona, the District of Columbia, and Wisconsin did not provide data for all students for SY 2020-21.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

**Figure 3. Percentage of enrolled students who experienced homelessness by primary nighttime residence, SY 2019-20: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**



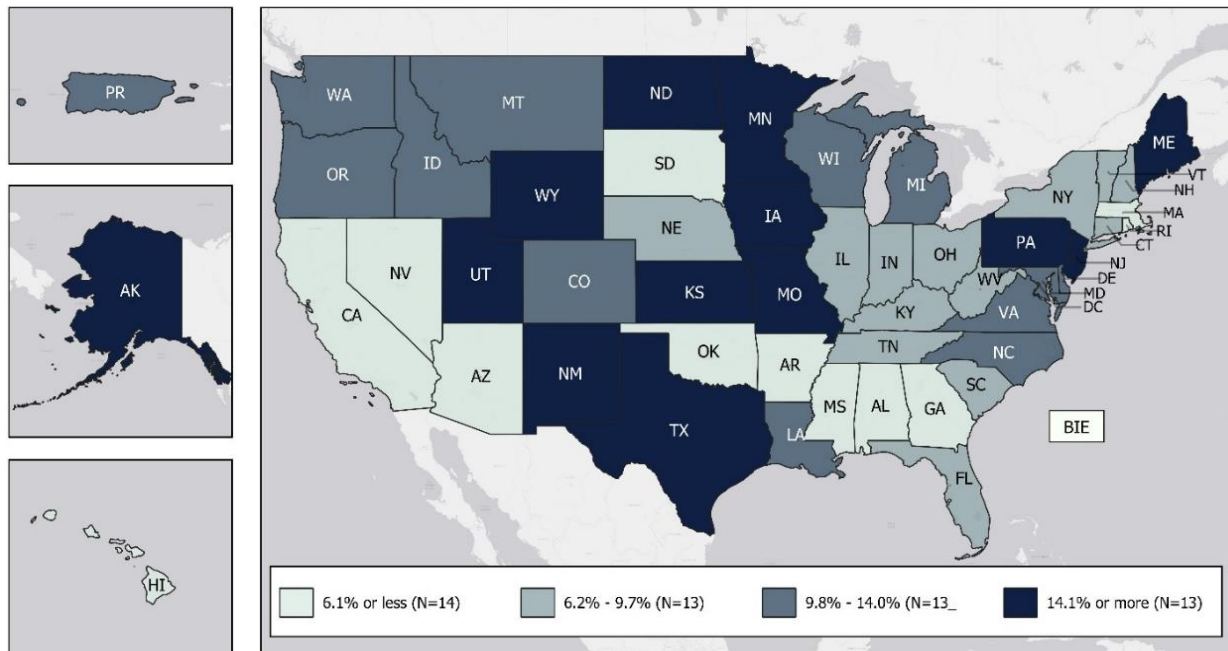
NOTE: Chart includes rounding to the nearest whole number. Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program. North Carolina enrolled 22 students and Louisiana enrolled three students in Grade 13.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

# Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) are youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who meet the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)). Students who are UHY can be of any age or grade. During all three school years included in this report, 9% of all students who experienced homelessness were unaccompanied. In 11 states, 14% or more of the students who experienced homelessness were identified as UHY.

**Figure 4. Percent of children and youth experiencing homelessness who were unaccompanied, SY 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**



NOTE: Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program. North Carolina enrolled 22 students and Louisiana enrolled three students in Grade 13.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EData file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

A lower percentage of UHY resided in shelters, transitional housing, and hotels or motels compared to the overall population of students who experienced homelessness. While 11% of students who experienced homelessness overall resided in shelters and transitional housing, 10% of UHY resided in shelters. Additionally, while 8% of students who experienced homelessness overall resided in hotels or motels, only 2% of UHY resided in hotels or motels. Four percent of both students who experienced homelessness overall and UHY resided in unsheltered situations. Finally, while 77% of students who experienced homelessness overall resided in doubled-up situations, 84% of UHY resided in doubled-up situations.

**Table 4. Number and percent of enrolled UHY by primary nighttime residence, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**

| Residence                                    | SY 2018-19 <sup>2</sup> | Percent of UHY | SY 2019-20 <sup>3</sup> | Percent of UHY | SY 2020-21 <sup>4</sup> | Percent of UHY | Percent change SYs 2018-19 to 2020-21 |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>                     | <b>125,729</b>          | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>112,822</b>          | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>94,363</b>           | <b>100.0</b>   | <b>-24.0</b>                          |
| Doubled-up                                   | 104,155                 | 82.8           | 95,516                  | 84.7           | 79,247                  | 83.9           | -23.9                                 |
| Shelters & transitional housing <sup>2</sup> | 13,221                  | 10.5           | 11,212                  | 9.9            | 9,485                   | 10.1           | -28.3                                 |
| Hotels/motels                                | 1,838                   | 1.5            | 1,578                   | 1.4            | 1,711                   | 1.8            | -6.9                                  |
| Unsheltered                                  | 5,041                   | 4.0            | 4,350                   | 3.9            | 3,984                   | 4.2            | -21.0                                 |

<sup>1</sup>Enrolled students include those who were aged 3 through 5 but not enrolled in kindergarten, kindergarten through Grade 13, and Ungraded. The following states included children from birth to Age 2: Colorado (SY 2018-19), North Carolina (SY 2017-18), and North Dakota (SYs 2017-18, 2018-19). Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program.

<sup>2</sup>Arizona, the District of Columbia, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, and South Carolina did not provide residence data for all UHY.

<sup>3</sup>Wisconsin did not provide residence data for all UHY.

<sup>4</sup>Arizona, Oregon, South Carolina, and Wisconsin did not provide residence data for all UHY.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EDData file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

## Additional Subgroups of Enrolled Students Who Experienced Homelessness

In addition to reporting information about UHY, states report data on three additional subgroups of students who experienced homelessness, including students:

- with disabilities,<sup>2</sup>
- who are English learners,<sup>3</sup> and
- who are migratory.<sup>4</sup>

Subgroups of students who experienced homelessness may belong to some, all, or none of the subgroups based on whether or not they meet the criteria for each subgroup. Between SYs 2018-19 and 2020-21, the percentage of students who were migratory and experienced homelessness remained stable at approximately 1% of all students who experienced homelessness. While the number of students with disabilities decreased by approximately 46,000, the percentage of students who experienced homelessness and also had a disability increased from 19 to 20%. Data show students who experienced homelessness and were English learners followed this same trend during the same timeframe, increasing from 16% to nearly 18% of students who experienced homelessness despite a decrease of more than 23,000 students in the English learner subgroup.

<sup>2</sup> As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> As defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (2015).

<sup>4</sup> As defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (2015).

Students with disabilities and English learners not only accounted for the two largest subgroups of students who experienced homelessness, but the percentage of students who were homeless and belonged to those subgroups was larger than the percentages of students in the general student body. Fifteen percent of students overall received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in SY 2020-21 versus 20% of students who experienced homelessness and were students with disabilities (Irwin et al., 2022). Similarly, while 10% of students overall were English learners, 18% of students who experienced homelessness were also English learners.

**Table 5. Number and percent of students who experienced homelessness, by subgroup, SYs 2018-19 through 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**

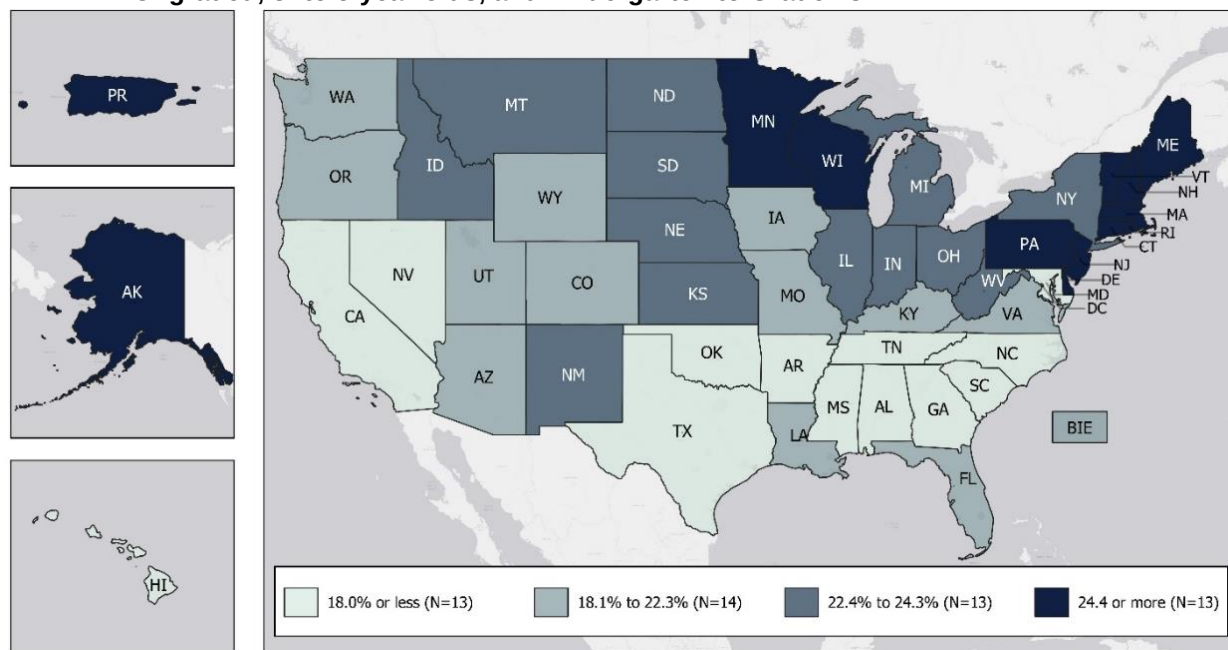
| Subgroup                              | Enrolled homeless students<br>SY 2018-19 | Percent of homeless students<br>SY 2018-19 | Enrolled homeless students<br>SY 2019-20 | Percent of homeless students<br>SY 2019-20 | Enrolled homeless students<br>SY 2020-21 | Percent of homeless students<br>SY 2020-21 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>              | <b>1,387,613</b>                         | <b>100.0</b>                               | <b>1,280,268</b>                         | <b>100.0</b>                               | <b>1,087,283</b>                         | <b>100.0</b>                               |
| Unaccompanied homeless youth          | 125,729                                  | 9.1                                        | 112,822                                  | 8.8                                        | 94,363                                   | 8.7                                        |
| Migratory children/youth <sup>2</sup> | 16,938                                   | 1.2                                        | 15,667                                   | 1.2                                        | 15,124                                   | 1.4                                        |
| English learners                      | 226,724                                  | 16.3                                       | 217,067                                  | 17.0                                       | 193,559                                  | 17.8                                       |
| Children with disabilities (IDEA)     | 266,739                                  | 19.2                                       | 244,737                                  | 19.1                                       | 220,599                                  | 20.3                                       |

<sup>1</sup>Counts include students aged 3 through 5 not in kindergarten, enrolled in kindergarten through Grade 13, and Ungraded. Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program.

<sup>2</sup>Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and West Virginia do not operate migrant programs.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EDData file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level.

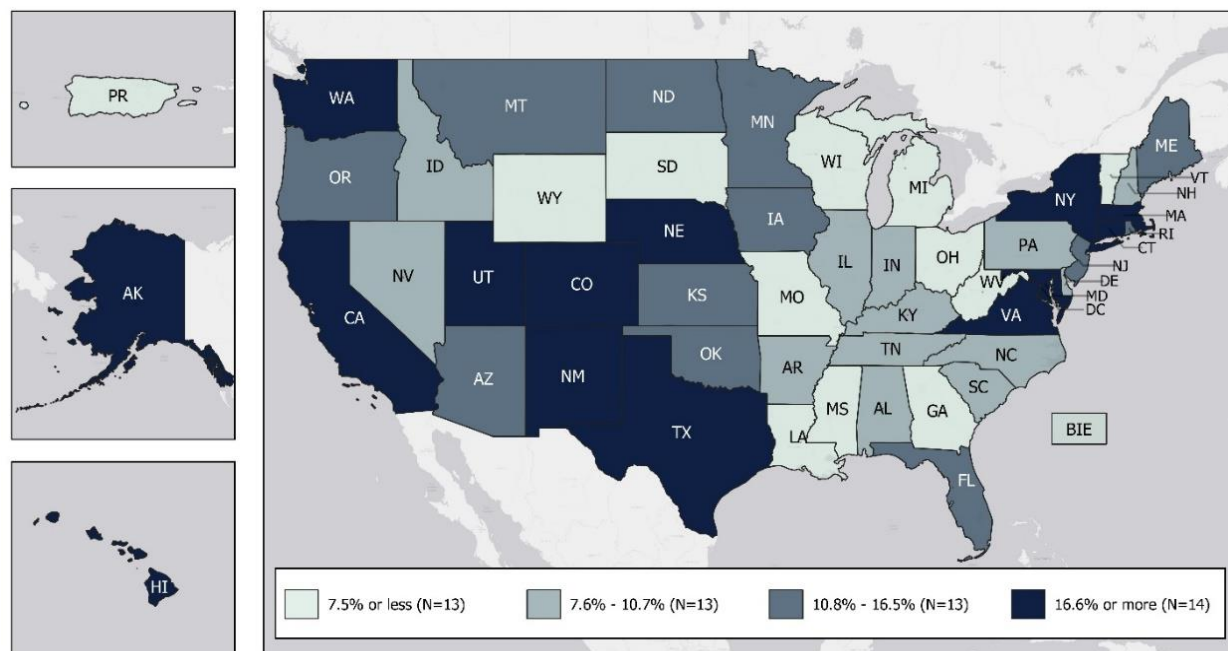
**Figure 5. Percent of students who experienced homelessness and had a disability, SY 2019-20: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**



NOTE: Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program. North Carolina enrolled 22 students and Louisiana enrolled three students in Grade 13.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, *EDFacts* file specification 118 (2019, 2020, 2021), SEA level.

**Figure 6. Percent of students who experienced homelessness and who were English learners, SY 2019-20: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**



NOTE: Grade 13 includes students who have successfully completed Grade 12 but stay in high school to participate in a bridge to higher education program. North Carolina enrolled 22 students and Louisiana enrolled three students in Grade 13.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, *EDFacts* file specification 118 (2019, 2020, 2021), SEA level.

# Race and Ethnicity

Starting with SY 2019-20, states reported information to ED on the race and ethnicity of students who experienced homelessness. While not all states were able to provide complete data that year, all states reported race and ethnicity data for SY 2020-21.

In SY 2020-21, the top three subgroups of students who experienced homelessness by race and ethnicity were Hispanic or Latino students at 39%, White students at 26%, and Black or African American students at 24%. Data from SY 2019-20 showed these same subgroups as the top three highest race and ethnicity groups, but with Hispanic or Latino students as the largest racial or ethnic group, followed by Black or African American students and White students (NCHE, 2021).

Data for other race and ethnicity subgroups showed students with two or more races at 5%, Asian students at 2%, American Indian or Native Alaskan at almost 2% and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students less than 1% of students who experienced homelessness.

**Table 6. Number of enrolled students by race, SY 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**

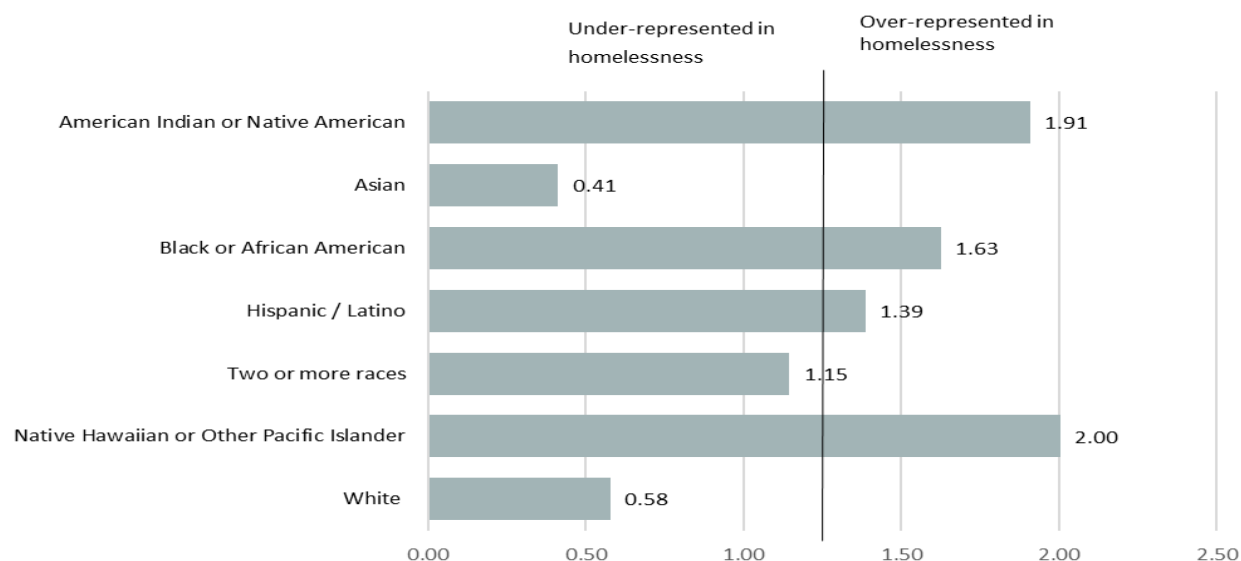
| Race/ethnicity                            | Homeless students | Percent of homeless students | All students      | Percent of all students |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>                  | <b>1,099,269</b>  | <b>100.0</b>                 | <b>46,573,953</b> | <b>100.0</b>            |
| Hispanic or Latino                        | 432,661           | 39.4                         | 14,074,307        | 28.4                    |
| Black or African American                 | 266,926           | 24.3                         | 7,396,794         | 14.9                    |
| White                                     | 288,765           | 26.3                         | 22,536,146        | 45.5                    |
| Two or more races                         | 56,198            | 5.1                          | 2,211,359         | 4.5                     |
| Asian                                     | 24,531            | 2.2                          | 2,674,661         | 5.4                     |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native         | 20,916            | 1.9                          | 494,442           | 1.0                     |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | 8,008             | 0.7                          | 180,311           | 0.4                     |

<sup>1</sup>Oregon, and Pennsylvania did not provide complete race/ethnicity data for students who experienced homelessness.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, *EDFacts* file specification 118 (2020, 2021, 2022), SEA level; National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, *State nonfiscal public elementary/secondary education survey* (2012-21 v. 1a), SEA level

Both Asian and White students were underrepresented among students who experienced homelessness. While White students accounted for 46% of all students enrolled in public schools, they represented 26% of students who experienced homelessness. Asian students accounted for 5% of students overall, but only 2% of students who experienced homelessness.

**Figure 7. Ratio of students who experienced homelessness to total students by race, SY 2020-21:  
Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts file specification 118 (2022), SEA level; National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, *State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey* (2020-21 v.1a), SEA level.

**Table 7. Number of enrolled students who experienced homelessness by race, SY 2020-21: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13**

| State                            | American Indian or Alaska Native | Asian         | Black or African American | Hispanic or Latino | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | Two or more races | White          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>United States<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>20,916</b>                    | <b>24,531</b> | <b>266,926</b>            | <b>432,661</b>     | <b>8,008</b>                              | <b>56,198</b>     | <b>288,765</b> |
| Alabama                          | 110                              | 49            | 4,507                     | 1,148              | 21                                        | 274               | 3,256          |
| Alaska                           | 781                              | 40            | 162                       | 234                | 291                                       | 466               | 604            |
| Arizona                          | 1,267                            | 45            | 1,839                     | 7,275              | 60                                        | 569               | 2,865          |
| Arkansas                         | 89                               | 76            | 2,378                     | 1,306              | 427                                       | 502               | 7,093          |
| Bureau of Indian Education       | 2,202                            | 0             | 0                         | 0                  | 0                                         | 0                 | 0              |
| California                       | 1,912                            | 9,143         | 18,144                    | 164,842            | 1,319                                     | 8,265             | 23,987         |
| Colorado                         | 244                              | 183           | 1,248                     | 7,825              | 123                                       | 732               | 4,821          |
| Connecticut                      | 9                                | 23            | 726                       | 1,692              | 0                                         | 207               | 653            |
| Delaware                         | 9                                | 11            | 1,409                     | 356                | 2                                         | 161               | 628            |
| District of Columbia             | 15                               | 5             | 4,210                     | 686                | 4                                         | 73                | 33             |
| Florida                          | 180                              | 323           | 22,196                    | 19,078             | 124                                       | 3,261             | 17,809         |
| Georgia                          | 78                               | 133           | 16,123                    | 3,990              | 29                                        | 1,655             | 9,153          |
| Hawaii                           | 3                                | 353           | 18                        | 583                | 1,680                                     | 347               | 105            |
| Idaho                            | 198                              | 31            | 135                       | 2,103              | 45                                        | 315               | 4,531          |
| Illinois                         | 100                              | 254           | 16,343                    | 7,511              | 40                                        | 1,704             | 10,946         |
| Indiana                          | 52                               | 312           | 3,973                     | 2,354              | 27                                        | 1,113             | 7,542          |

**Table 7. Number of enrolled students who experienced homelessness by race, SY 2019-20: Ungraded, 3- to 5-year-olds, and kindergarten to Grade 13, cont'd.**

| State <sup>1</sup> | American<br>Indian or<br>Alaska<br>Native | Asian | Black or<br>African<br>American | Hispanic<br>or Latino | Native<br>Hawaiian<br>or Other<br>Pacific<br>Islander | Two or<br>more<br>races | White  |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Iowa               | 75                                        | 97    | 1,436                           | 1,179                 | 195                                                   | 531                     | 2,544  |
| Kansas             | 70                                        | 46    | 960                             | 1,399                 | 44                                                    | 590                     | 2,523  |
| Kentucky           | 39                                        | 140   | 3,078                           | 2,004                 | 21                                                    | 965                     | 12,450 |
| Louisiana          | 74                                        | 44    | 6,508                           | 962                   | 10                                                    | 452                     | 3,721  |
| Maine              | 18                                        | 22    | 349                             | 130                   | 0                                                     | 73                      | 1,550  |
| Maryland           | 40                                        | 79    | 5,523                           | 2,801                 | 14                                                    | 839                     | 2,464  |
| Massachusetts      | 49                                        | 542   | 3,845                           | 10,496                | 15                                                    | 823                     | 4,184  |
| Michigan           | 377                                       | 134   | 7,278                           | 3,163                 | 37                                                    | 1,934                   | 13,944 |
| Minnesota          | 912                                       | 294   | 4,083                           | 1,578                 | 31                                                    | 1,182                   | 2,508  |
| Mississippi        | 6                                         | 22    | 5,490                           | 339                   | 8                                                     | 273                     | 1,616  |
| Missouri           | 170                                       | 167   | 12,521                          | 2,639                 | 232                                                   | 2,019                   | 14,926 |
| Montana            | 2,006                                     | 9     | 47                              | 350                   | 20                                                    | 259                     | 1,979  |
| Nebraska           | 51                                        | 50    | 549                             | 1,069                 | 21                                                    | 148                     | 661    |
| Nevada             | 193                                       | 306   | 3,813                           | 5,858                 | 317                                                   | 1,262                   | 3,370  |
| New Hampshire      | 11                                        | 32    | 191                             | 525                   | 0                                                     | 159                     | 2,191  |
| New Jersey         | 10                                        | 248   | 3,950                           | 3,916                 | 25                                                    | 378                     | 2,012  |
| New Mexico         | 1,208                                     | 22    | 264                             | 5,275                 | 6                                                     | 166                     | 1,194  |
| New York           | 1,165                                     | 8,244 | 37,551                          | 64,418                | 390                                                   | 2,276                   | 12,299 |
| North Carolina     | 143                                       | 93    | 11,199                          | 4,106                 | 45                                                    | 1,604                   | 5,492  |
| North Dakota       | 435                                       | 9     | 217                             | 293                   | 23                                                    | 148                     | 650    |
| Ohio               | 46                                        | 131   | 9,339                           | 2,398                 | 70                                                    | 2,233                   | 10,482 |
| Oklahoma           | 2,781                                     | 232   | 3,205                           | 4,873                 | 149                                                   | 3,239                   | 7,959  |
| Oregon             | 386                                       | 124   | 681                             | 5,876                 | 301                                                   | 1,476                   | 8,962  |
| Pennsylvania       | 70                                        | 225   | 8,316                           | 6,052                 | 20                                                    | 1,950                   | 10,003 |
| Puerto Rico        | 7                                         | 2     | 4                               | 2,401                 | 0                                                     | 0                       | 10     |
| Rhode Island       | 28                                        | 7     | 147                             | 336                   | 2                                                     | 108                     | 481    |
| South Carolina     | 29                                        | 35    | 4,499                           | 1,858                 | 19                                                    | 953                     | 4,607  |
| South Dakota       | 727                                       | 7     | 68                              | 260                   | 6                                                     | 167                     | 326    |
| Tennessee          | 39                                        | 87    | 3,735                           | 2,339                 | 45                                                    | 841                     | 7,300  |
| Texas              | 333                                       | 867   | 20,924                          | 50,047                | 196                                                   | 2,967                   | 17,762 |
| Utah               | 265                                       | 150   | 285                             | 3,845                 | 493                                                   | 445                     | 4,812  |
| Vermont            | 3                                         | 6     | 75                              | 43                    | 0                                                     | 48                      | 831    |
| Virginia           | 51                                        | 146   | 5,549                           | 3,867                 | 13                                                    | 996                     | 3,130  |
| Washington         | 992                                       | 667   | 3,140                           | 11,779                | 1,013                                                 | 3,320                   | 12,020 |
| West Virginia      | 8                                         | 35    | 484                             | 294                   | 1                                                     | 431                     | 8,199  |
| Wisconsin          | 551                                       | 224   | 4,169                           | 2,522                 | 28                                                    | 1,219                   | 4,737  |
| Wyoming            | 299                                       | 5     | 43                              | 388                   | 6                                                     | 80                      | 840    |

<sup>1</sup>Oregon, and Pennsylvania did not provide complete race/ethnicity data for students who experienced homelessness.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, EDData file specification 118 (2022), SEA level.

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