

For Immediate Release

February 14, 2019

Contact: Erin Ingram

eingram@civicerprises.net



First-Ever Data on Homeless Student High School Graduation Reveals Educational Challenges Above and Beyond Poverty Alone

Public schools report the highest number of homeless students on record

New federal data finds a 64% national high school graduation rate for homeless students, 13% below other low-income students, 20% below all students

Graduation Rate Data from 26 Individual States Shows Wide Gaps

WASHINGTON, DC – Homeless students face unique barriers to high school graduation, beyond even those faced by other students living in poverty, new data shows.

Today, [Education Leads Home](#) (a collaborative effort by SchoolHouse Connection, Civic, the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness, and America’s Promise Alliance) released the first-ever look at **high school graduation rates for homeless students from 26 states**. State-level data shows that homeless students graduate on time at significantly lower rates than their housed peers, with the lowest state rate at just 45 percent. In some states, the gap between homeless students and all students is over 35 percentage points, and the gap between low-income and homeless students is over 20 percentage points. **One of the goals set by Education Leads Home is to raise the graduation rate for homeless students to 90 percent by 2030.**

In addition, [federal data released this week](#) found a **national average graduation rate of just 64 percent for homeless students**, as compared to the low-income rate of 77.6 percent, and 84.1 percent for all students. “These gaps reflect the significant educational challenges – above and beyond poverty – that homeless students face,” said Erin Ingram, senior policy advisor at Civic. “We can and must do more to remove these barriers – students cannot afford to miss out on the critical first step of a high school diploma due to homelessness.”

The Education Leads Home campaign also released fifty [State Homeless Student Snapshots](#), providing state-specific data on the number of homeless students identified and enrolled in public schools; the number of extremely poor children and youth also experiencing homelessness; the percentage of children under the age of six experiencing homelessness; and the number of FAFSA applicants who are determined to be (or at risk of becoming) an unaccompanied homeless youth.

This year saw the highest number of homeless students enrolled in public schools on record. In part, this may be due to schools improving their systems of identifying homeless students, a positive first step, since those students will be more likely to access the supports they need if identified. For this reason, it is also worth considering that states reporting higher numbers of homeless students or lower graduation rates may actually be the states that are taking the problem most seriously. However, this record high also points to a growing challenge for schools, and the need for increased supports for homeless students across the country. Today’s data creates a critical baseline against which to track progress.

“Homelessness among students is more than a housing problem; its causes are complex, and cannot be remedied by housing alone,” said [Barbara Duffield](#), Executive Director at [SchoolHouse Connection](#). “Education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty and establishing economic mobility. It’s the only way we can prevent today’s homeless children and youth from becoming the next generation of homeless adults. The good news is that we

have strong policy on the books that many school districts are implementing robustly; we can and should learn from and replicate these best practices.”

Students experiencing homelessness are [87 percent](#) more likely to drop out of school than their housed peers, and without a high school diploma, youth are [4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness](#) as young adults later in life. Furthermore, more than 95 percent of jobs created during the economic recovery have gone to workers with at least some college education, while those with a high school diploma or less are being left behind. Research continues to support the imperative of actively addressing the educational needs of homeless students to help break the cycle of poverty.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states are now required to disaggregate and share graduation rates for homeless students. As ESSA is implemented, Education Leads Home will continue to monitor states’ progress and identify and share best practices to improve student outcomes in communities across the country. This data will allow experts and policymakers to assess the need for improved policies and targeted resources to keep students on track to graduate.

For more information, visit www.educationleadshome.org or join the conversation on Twitter at [@eduleadshome](https://twitter.com/eduleadshome).

***Education Leads Home** is a national campaign focused on improving education and life outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Over 1.3 million students in America’s public schools don’t have a stable place to call home, and 1.2 million children under the age of six experience homelessness. For these children and youth, where they sleep at night is constantly changing. They may get shuffled into a shelter or end up staying with extended family, friends or even strangers across town, facing hours on public transportation just to get to school. They may sleep in a car without any access to a healthy breakfast, a shower, or a place to wash their clothes. Education is the most important long-term strategy to break the cycle of homelessness - young adults without a high school diploma or GED are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness. Education Leads Home is working to close educational achievement and attainment gaps for homeless students, and connect them to stronger and healthier futures.*

Education Leads Home Core Partners

***SchoolHouse Connection** works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth. Our vision is that children and youth experiencing homelessness have full access to quality learning, birth through higher education, so they will never be homeless as adults, and the next generation will never be homeless. www.schoolhouseconnection.org*

***Civic** is a social enterprise firm that works with corporations, nonprofits, foundations, universities and governments to develop innovative campaigns and public policies in the fields of education, national service, civic engagement, conservation, public health and more. We work with organizations that seek to challenge the status quo and grow their impact for the greater good. Working closely with clients to determine what they need to better engage with their stakeholders and serve their constituents, we specialize in research and policy development, strategy and coalition building, state and federal policy analysis, and strategic communications. www.civicerprises.net*

***The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH)** is a New York City-based policy research organization focused on family homelessness in New York City and throughout the United States. ICPH is dedicated to bringing family and child homelessness into focus through research, policy briefs, and interactive data tools. ICPH’s publications inform government officials, policymakers, advocates, academics, and service providers from across the country to promote a robust, evidence-based dialogue on family and child homelessness. www.icphusa.org*

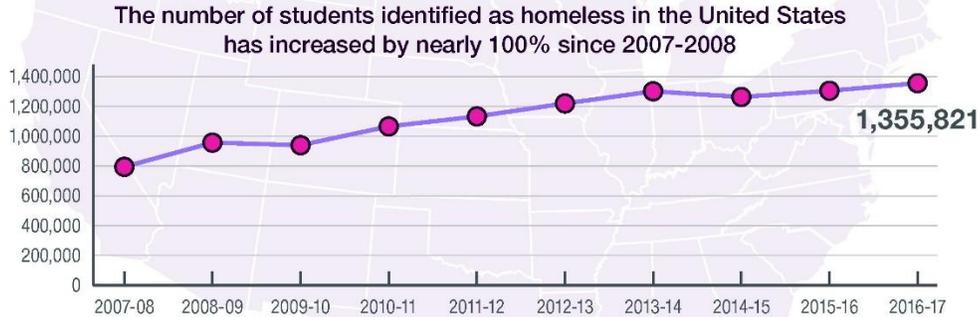
***America’s Promise Alliance** is the nation’s largest network dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth. It brings together more than 400 national organizations and thousands of community leaders to focus the nation’s attention on young people’s lives and voices, lead bold campaigns to expand opportunity, conduct groundbreaking research on what young people need to thrive, and accelerate the adoption of strategies that help young people succeed. GradNation, its signature campaign, has helped to increase the nation’s high school graduation rate to a record high. To learn more, visit www.AmericasPromise.org.*

Education Leads Home

Snapshot on Student Homelessness

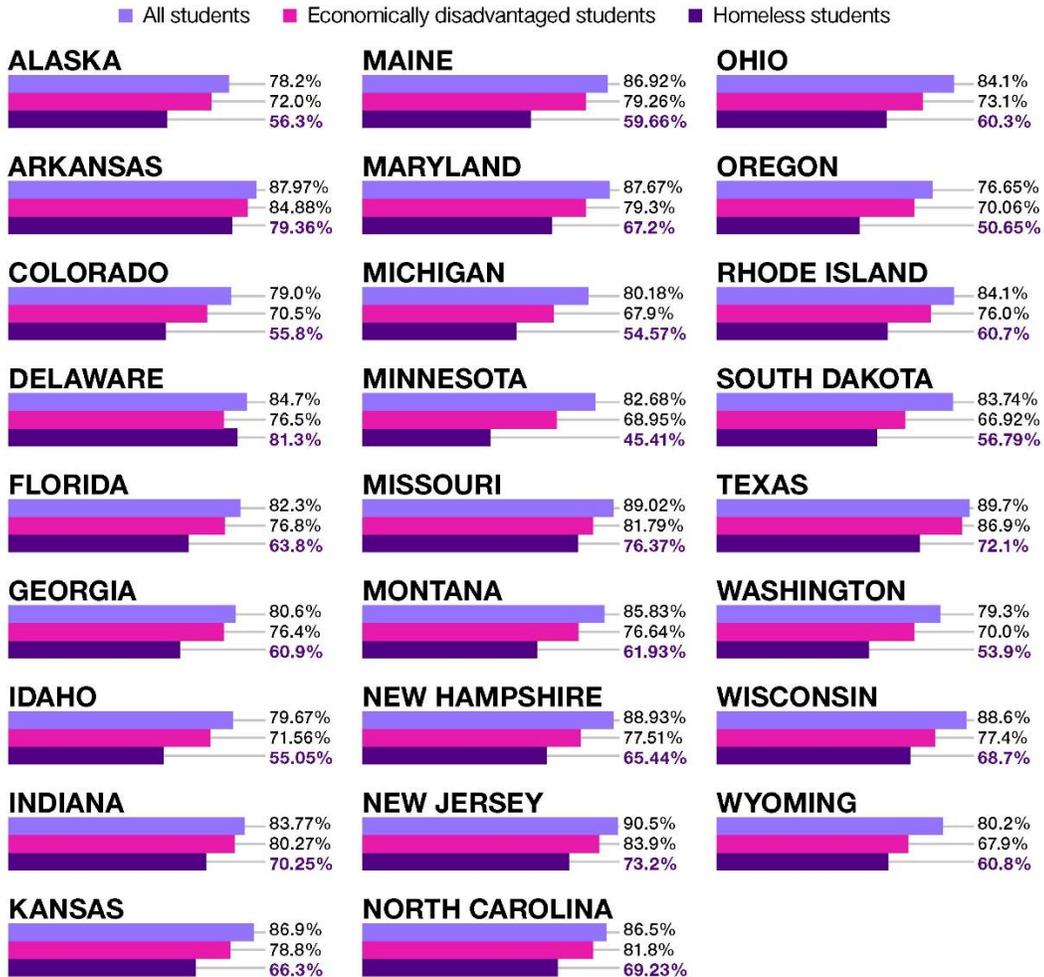


The National Picture



These numbers do not capture homeless children and youth who were not identified as homeless; who were not enrolled in school; or who dropped out of school. Nor do they include young children who were not enrolled in preschool programs administered by local educational agencies.

On average, just 64 percent of homeless students graduated high school on-time, well below both the national average of 84.1 percent and their low-income peers at 77.6 percent. Without a high school diploma, youth are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness as young adults. Education Leads Home is helping students, schools, and communities break this cycle of homelessness by supporting a 90 percent high school graduation rate for homeless students by 2030.



As of the 2017-2018 school year, ESSA requires all states to submit graduation rate data for students experiencing homelessness. However, 44 states submitted data for the 2016-2017 school year, which is the source of the national graduation rate. The individual state data shown here were provided voluntarily to Education Leads Home by state education agencies.