



America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness

More than 1.5 million homeless American children are stranded at the grim nexus of poverty, economic recession, and escalating housing foreclosures—one in every 50 American children is homeless each year. With foreclosures and layoffs increasing daily, the number of children and families without homes in the United States is likely to increase.

America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness presents the clearest snapshot yet of the 1.5 million children who are homeless each year—where they live and the consequences of their precarious situations. This count is conservative because it is based on data reported prior to the nation's economic crisis. The report documents the extent of child homelessness, child well-being, risk for child homelessness, and policy and planning efforts for each state. Recommendations for state and federal action are also included. The complete report and a 16-page summary document can be downloaded at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

Homeless Children: Some Facts

- More than 1.5 million children—one in 50—are homeless in the United States each year.
- Homeless families comprise roughly 34% of the total U.S. homeless population.
- 42% of homeless children are below the age of six.
- More than twice as many (1 in 7) homeless children have moderate to severe health conditions compared to middle-income children (1 in 16).
- Math and reading proficiency rates for homeless children are 16% lower on average than scores for all students.
- 36% of homeless children repeat a grade.
- Estimated graduation rates for homeless children are below 25%.
- Homeless children live in households where adults “hit or throw things” three times as often as middle-class children.
- By age twelve, 83% of homeless children have been exposed to at least one serious violent event.
- One in six homeless children has serious emotional disturbances, twice the rate of middle-class children.

State Report Card on Child Homelessness

Data from all 50 states were collected and analyzed along four major domains: extent of child homelessness; child well-being; risk for child homelessness; and state policy and planning efforts. A composite of these four domains was used to rank the states. Although the states are ranked from 1 to 50, there are homeless children in every state, and work must be done throughout the country to ensure that no child in the United States is homeless for even one day.

Top 10

1. Connecticut
2. New Hampshire
3. Hawaii
4. Rhode Island
5. North Dakota
6. Minnesota
7. Wisconsin
8. Massachusetts
9. Maine
10. Vermont

Bottom 10

50. Texas
49. Georgia
48. Arkansas
47. New Mexico
46. Louisiana
45. Nevada
44. North Carolina
43. Florida
42. Kentucky
41. Mississippi

For the complete state ranks and individual state profiles, visit www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

Policy Recommendations

The report makes various state policy recommendations including:

- Creating state and local housing trust funds to complement the National Housing Trust Fund.
- Increasing the number of children who have health insurance by enrolling eligible children in Medicaid or SCHIP.
- Improving access and supports for uninterrupted schooling.
- Increasing participation in the federal nutrition programs.
- Developing family-oriented services to treat the extreme trauma of homelessness.
- Ensuring homeless children and families are included in state plans to end homelessness.

The report also makes various federal policy recommendations including:

- Capitalizing the new National Housing Trust Fund at \$10 billion for two years to rehabilitate or build 100,000 rental homes for the lowest income households using green standards.
- Funding 400,000 new Housing Vouchers at \$3.6 billion for two years to provide the lowest income households with rent assistance.
- Fully funding Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431) at \$210 million to ensure that every homeless child can enroll in and attend school, and receive the services they need to succeed.
- Investing \$3 billion into child care vouchers for children experiencing homelessness so that they can receive the early care and education they deserve, and so that their parents can engage in employment, job training, and other activities to lift their family out of homelessness.
- Fully funding the Violence Prevention and Services Act at \$175 million and increase the Victims of Crime Act Cap to \$717 million annually.
- Expanding the TANF contingency fund so that states are able to provide cash assistance to the increasing number of very poor families.
- Restoring expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the food stamp program) eligibility for all homeless individuals and families.
- Requiring the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) to make child and family homelessness a high priority.
- Coordinating Congressional Committee activities on homelessness with the federal ICH.
- Requiring all studies and programs supported by federal agencies and serving low-income people to collect data on the housing status of program beneficiaries.

For a full list of the report's federal and state policy recommendations, please visit www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

Campaign to End Child Homelessness

The release of *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness* launches the Campaign to End Child Homelessness, an initiative by The National Center on Family Homelessness to bring together advocates, communities, families, policymakers, and others at local and national levels to galvanize public and political will to end this national crisis by:

- Increasing public awareness of the scope and impact of homelessness on children and their families.
- Informing federal and state policies to better address the needs of homeless children.
- Improving program design and service delivery to effectively meet the unique needs of homeless children and their families.

To learn more about the Campaign to End Child Homelessness, visit www.familyhomelessness.org.

For More Information

For more information, contact Christina Jordan, Senior Policy Manager, at 617-969-7146 or Christina.Jordan@familyhomelessness.org. Visit www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org to share your ideas and experiences from your state and community, and get involved in the Campaign to End Child Homelessness.

About The National Center on Family Homelessness

The National Center on Family Homelessness, founded in 1988, is the nation's foremost authority on family homelessness, and the only national organization dedicated solely to helping homeless families. Through state-of-the-art research, program design, and public education, The National Center is committed to ending family homelessness in America. For more information, please visit www.familyhomelessness.org.

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