

Pulling the Rug Out Beneath McKinney-Vento: How Block Granting Will Likely Remove Protections for Unhoused Children and Youth



On Tuesday, the NEPC [Newsletter](#) explained important research about the effects of moving program funding into block grants. In particular, researchers have shown how block-grant funding levels tend to drop over time.

The newsletter added a second point: that the promised flexibility of block grants also tends to be an illusion. To illustrate that point, we asserted that McKinney-Vento protections for unhoused children and youth were not flexible—a poor choice on our part. In fact, the Trump budget proposal is likely to erase those protections, leaving no rights for these most vulnerable among our neighbors.

The [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) was reauthorized as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (Title IX, Part A). It provides important rights and protections for the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness, such as transportation and immediate enrollment. However, those rights and protections attach only if the state education agencies receive the funding included as part of the act—called the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program.

According to a [new report from SchoolHouse Connection](#), “36 states plus the Bureau of In-

dian Affairs, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico – rely entirely on the McKinney-Vento Act to provide homeless children and youth with any of the core protections for access to educational opportunities.” In fact, among the other states, only three have legislation that would continue to provide all basic protections provided by McKinney-Vento if the federal protections disappeared.

And that disappearance is baked into the Trump budget proposal for creating the so-called *K-12 Simplified Funding Program* block grant. While some McKinney-Vento funding is proposed to be consolidated within the block grant (see page 15 of the [budget summary](#)), the EHCY program would be eliminated, meaning that school districts would not be required to use any block-grant funding for children and youth experiencing homelessness, and none of the protections included in the EHCY program would be preserved.

As explained in Tuesday’s newsletter, the purported flexibility provided by block granting is a smokescreen that conceals the loss of funding and the loss of protections that would otherwise be attached to that funding. That newsletter incorrectly held up students experiencing homelessness as among those who might have some protections preserved under the Trump proposal; in fact, they will be among those most harmed.

NEPC Resources on School Finance and Funding

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