



Georgia defines “homeless” as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This can include a primary nighttime residence that is not meant for human habitation or a shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements.<sup>1</sup> McKinney-Vento defines “youth homelessness” more broadly to include children and youth who:<sup>2</sup>

- Share the housing of other due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Live in an emergency or transitional shelter or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus, or train stations, or similar settings; or,
- Who are migratory children living in one of the above circumstances.

## Facts on Child Homelessness in Georgia



### How Many Children Experience Homelessness?

#### Georgia's pre-school aged population:

Approximately **36,000** children under age six experienced homelessness in 2019, with more than 1,500 served in Early Care and Education environments.<sup>3</sup>

#### Georgia's K-12 population:

**36,579** K-12 students experienced homelessness in the 2021-2022 school year.<sup>4</sup>

### Where are unstably housed children living?<sup>5</sup>

- **72%** reported as being doubled up, i.e., staying with extended family or friends.
- **23%** reported staying in extended stay hotel/motels.

## Housing Insecurity in Georgia

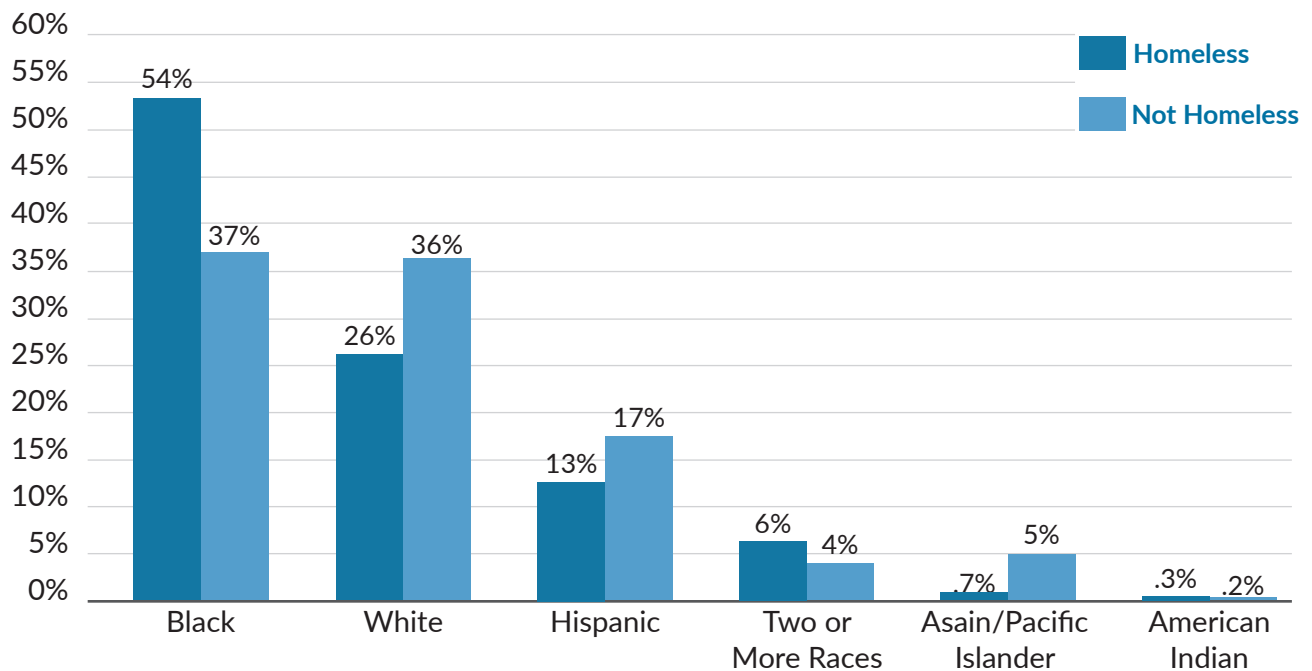


Housing insecurity directly impacts children. According to the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey taken at the end of August 2023, **68%** of respondents, 18 years and older, say they are very likely or somewhat likely to be evicted from their house in the next 2 months.<sup>6</sup>

**2,784** people in families with children and **479** unaccompanied youth in Georgia were counted as homeless in a 2022 Housing and Urban Development point in time survey.<sup>7</sup>

**In FY23, approximately 19% of foster care placements cite inadequate housing as a reason for removal of a child from the home.<sup>8</sup>**

## Homeless v. Non-Homeless Students, by Race and Ethnicity



**Black** students make up a disproportionate amount of Georgia's homeless student population.<sup>15</sup>

## Impact of Child and Youth Homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to:<sup>9 10 11</sup>

- be suspended
- miss school
- have poor academic performance
- drop out of school



**Risk factors for child and youth homelessness:**<sup>12 13 14</sup>

- Family conflict/abuse/neglect
- Economic instability/poverty
- Race (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- Sexual orientation (LGBTQ+)
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Housing insecurity/Lack of affordable housing
- Involvement with the foster care or juvenile justice system
- Transitioning out of foster care or residential/institutional facilities

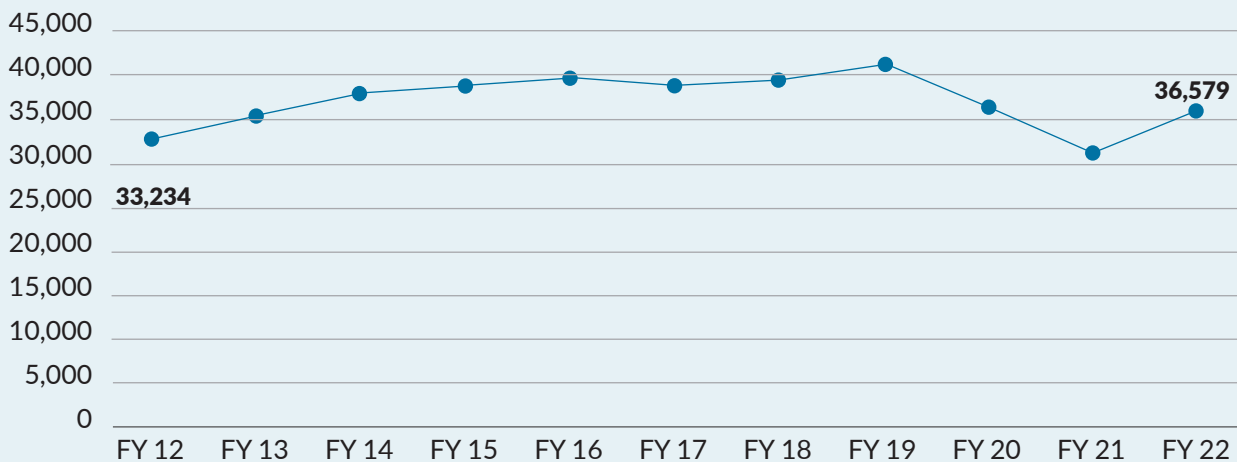
## McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The primary piece of federal legislation focused on **addressing the needs of homeless people in the United States**. It was signed into law in 1987 and has been amended and reauthorized several times.

### McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

The section of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with **problems faced by homeless youth with enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school**. The program requires state education agencies ensure each homeless child has equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as their peers.

### McKinney-Vento Count of Homeless Students in Georgia\*



\*The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted data collection and homelessness may be higher than recorded.

**In FY 22, the Georgia Department of Education subgranted more than \$2.7 million for homelessness initiatives in 48 school districts.**<sup>16</sup>

### Examples of 2020-2021 McKinney-Vento Programs in Georgia<sup>17, 18</sup>

#### Marietta City Schools

**\$54,130**

The Marietta City School District used a Whole Child Approach, working with community partners to provide wraparound services for McKinney-Vento students and families.<sup>19</sup>

#### Cobb County

**\$104,157**

The district used American Rescue Plan funds to identify and support 1,454 students to remain in their schools of origin at a 42% success rate.

#### Muscogee County

**\$86,193**

The district dedicated a week to allow students to attend college and career fairs, complete financial aid application, conduct scholarship searches, and prepare for college admission tests. They also used funds to deliver school supplies and uniforms to homes, shelters, and hotels and granted parents access to the on-campus store and computer lab.

## Policy Recommendations

### For Everyone

- Improve public awareness of the scope and impact of homelessness on children and families.
- Improve program design and service delivery to meet unique needs to homeless children and families.

### State and Local Policies

- Expand funding for Find Help Georgia, a comprehensive directory of community resources including financial assistance, food access, medical care, child care, job training, and other essential needs.
- Improve Georgia's renter protection laws to reduce incidents of unsafe housing and eviction.
- Increase the availability and equitable distribution of quality and affordable housing and support policies, including rent and mortgage subsidies, which protect families and children from unsafe housing, hardship or baseless evictions, and untenable fees and penalties.
- Support policies that facilitate housing opportunities for people with past evictions, criminal histories, and mental health issues.
- Improve access to educational opportunities that will ensure success for children and youth who are homeless.
- Create and fund community-based resources, such as drop-in centers and job-training, to prevent youth who age out of foster care and unaccompanied youth from becoming homeless.
- Collect data on housing status to increase knowledge of the scope of homelessness.



## References for Homelessness and Children in Georgia

Suggested citation: Voices for Georgia's Children. (2023). Fact Sheet: Homelessness and Children in Georgia. Voices for Georgia's Children. <https://adobe.ly/3GneHb7>.

- 1 Georgia Department of Community Affairs. (2019). "Definition and Documentation of Homeless: HUD Program Eligibility." Accessed October 5, 2023. [https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/homeless\\_eligibility\\_and\\_documentation.pdf](https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/homeless_eligibility_and_documentation.pdf).
- 2 National Conference of State Legislatures. "Youth Homelessness Overview." Accessed October 5, 2023. <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/youth-homelessness-overview>.
- 3 "Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles Data Collected in 2018-19". United States Department of Education. 2021. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>.
- 4 "Draft Title IX, Part A 2021-2022 Annual Report: McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth. Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Annual%20Report%20-%20FY23%20MVP%2010.3.23%20DRAFT.pdf>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 United States Census Bureau. "Week 61 Household Pulse Survey: Table 3b". Accessed October 11, 2023. [https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2023/wk61/housing3b\\_week61.xlsx](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2023/wk61/housing3b_week61.xlsx).
- 7 The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress." Accessed October 4, 2023. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>
- 8 Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. (October 2023), Data request.
- 9 Annie E. Casey Foundation (March 2023). "Preventing and Ending Youth Homelessness in America." Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-youthhomelessness-2023.pdf>.
- 10 American Psychological Association. "Exploring mental health effects of poverty, hunger, and homelessness of children and teens." Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/poverty-hunger-homelessness-children>.
- 11 "Draft Title IX, Part A 2021-2022 Annual Report: McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth. Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Annual%20Report%20-%20FY23%20MVP%2010.3.23%20DRAFT.pdf>.
- 12 National Conference of State Legislatures. (March 2023). "Youth Homelessness Overview." Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/youth-homelessness-overview>.
- 13 Youth.gov. "Homelessness and Runaway." Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/homelessness-and-runaway>.
- 14 Annie E. Casey Foundation (March 2023). Preventing and Ending Youth Homelessness in America. Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-youthhomelessness-2023.pdf>.
- 15 "Title IX, Part A 2020-2021 Annual Report: McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth." January 2022. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Annual%20Report%20-%20FY21%20McKinney-Vento.pdf#search=mckinney%20vento>.
- 16 "Draft Title IX, Part A 2021-2022 Annual Report: McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth. Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Annual%20Report%20-%20FY23%20MVP%2010.3.23%20DRAFT.pdf>.
- 17 Georgia Department of Education. "McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHY) Liaison Workshop, September 28, 2022." Accessed November 14, 2022. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Opening%20Session.pdf>.
- 18 "Draft Title IX, Part A 2021-2022 Annual Report: McKinney Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth. Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Annual%20Report%20-%20FY23%20MVP%2010.3.23%20DRAFT.pdf>.
- 19 Marietta City Schools. "Effective Wrap Around Supports for McKinney-Vento Students." Accessed October 6, 2023. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/Marietta%20City%20Schools%20-%20Effective%20Wrap%20Around%20Supports%20for%20MV%20Students.pdf>.