

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Healthy Students' Monitoring Report on
the South Carolina Department of Education's
Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

Scope of Review:

During March 15-17, 2016, a review team from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) monitored the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE's) administration of the Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) and the reservation for homeless children under section 1113(c)(3)(A) of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA).

Previous Monitoring:

ED reviewed SCDE's EHCY programs during the week of January 13-15, 2009. The report is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/monitoring/index.html>

Current Review:

In its review of the EHCY program, ED examined SCDE's:

- Procedures and guidance for the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students;
- Technical assistance provided to LEAs with and without subgrants;
- SCDE's McKinney-Vento EHCY State Plan; and
- LEA applications for subgrants and local evaluations of projects in Richland 02 and Lexington 05 school districts, as well as the local liaisons and staff from Horry 01 and Orangeburg 05 public schools, both non-subgrantee school districts.

ED staff also interviewed the McKinney-Vento EHCY State coordinator to confirm information obtained at the local site and discuss administration of the program. Based on their review, ED has the following observations, commendations of emerging practices and recommendation:

Emerging Practices:

OSHS considers emerging practices to be operational activities or initiatives that contribute to successful outcomes or enhance agency performance capabilities. Emerging practices are those that have been successfully implemented and demonstrate the potential for replication by other agencies.

Typically, emerging practices have not been evaluated as rigorously as "promising," "effective," "evidence-based," or "best" practices but still offer ideas that work in specific situations. As a result of its monitoring activities, OSHS identified the following emerging practices for SCDE:

- The EHCY program actively participates in State and regional interagency coordination efforts to reduce and end family and youth homelessness. The SCDE State Coordinator is on the Board of Directors of the South Carolina Coalition for the Homeless (SCCH) and serves as a state advocate and coordinator on four regional continuums of care (CoCs). As a result of these efforts, there has also been improved local coordination between education, human service and housing agencies assisting families, children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- As a result of coordination between the EHCY State Coordinator and the South Carolina Department of Social Services, which administers the Child Care Development Fund Block Grant program that provides child care vouchers and subsidies to low-income families, including prioritizing those experiencing homelessness, 250 vouchers were recently made available for the younger siblings of students identified as homeless by local liaisons. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services continue to promote closer collaboration at the State level and this example shows how it can benefit homeless families served by local school districts.
- The Office of the Coordinator is using carryover funds from its reservation for State level coordination activities to support a pilot grant program that targets LEAs that may underidentify or underserve homeless children and youth and their families. Local liaisons from LEAs that get these grants are expected to participate in additional training and technical assistance efforts at the national, State and local level to identify practices and strategies used by other LEAs to better identify and serve homeless children and youth and support their school attendance and success. These relatively small, one-time mini-grants reportedly have a big impact in helping LEAs more fully implement the requirements and expectations of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Indicator 1.1: Monitoring and evaluation of LEAs with and without subgrants

Recommendation 1.1.1

Observation: SCDE staff recognized that they do not yet systematically use their annual State and LEA level data to improve overall homeless student program performance and outcomes. Furthermore, neither of the two reviewed subgrant projects included measurable goals that referenced baseline measures or annual milestones toward attaining those program outcome goals over three years, although they do submit end of year reports that account for meeting annual service output goals.

Recommendation: ED recommends that SCDE provide technical assistance to its subgrantees on creating goals (measurable to the maximum extent appropriate) that include baseline performance measures and annual milestones toward multi-year outcome goals. Subgrantees may not be fully aware of LEA data reported by SEAs to ED via the ED*Facts* Reporting System. These data include graduate and dropout numbers for homeless students and proficiency in math, reading, and science, grades 3-8 and high school, at the LEA and school levels.

One approach that SCDE should consider is asking subgrantees for an annual program evaluation that accounts for any change in performance of the previous two year’s EHCY program performance data at the LEA and school levels. Longitudinal tracking of performance provides information at the program level on whether program improvements are moving outcomes in the desired direction.

Table 2. Summary of Monitoring Results for the Title VII-B Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

Indicator Number	Description	Status	Page
Indicator 1.1	The SEA conducts monitoring and evaluation of LEAs with and without subgrants, sufficient to ensure compliance with McKinney-Vento program requirements.	Met Requirements 1 Recommendation	2-3
Indicator 2.1	The SEA implements procedures to address the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students through coordinating and collaborating with other program offices and State agencies.	Met Requirements	N/A
Indicator 2.2	The SEA provides, or provides for, technical assistance to LEAs to ensure appropriate implementation of the statute.	Met Requirements	N/A
Indicator 3.1	The SEA ensures that LEA subgrant plans for services to eligible homeless students meet all requirements.	Met Requirements	N/A
Indicator 3.2	The SEA complies with the statutory and other regulatory requirements governing the reservation of funds for State-level coordination activities.	Met Requirements	N/A
Indicator 3.3	The SEA has a system for ensuring the prompt resolution of disputes.	Met Requirements	N/A