

Results in Brief:

Study of the Implementation of the ESEA Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program

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The children of migratory workers are extremely disadvantaged and are more likely than their nonmigratory peers to live in poverty and experience disconnected educational experiences that can hinder their educational progress and success (Berger 2014; Quandt et al. 2016; U.S. Department of Labor 2017; Wiltz 2016). Congress established the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966 through an amendment to the 1965 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. The goal of the program under *ESEA*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)*, is to help meet the unique educational needs of migratory children. The *Study of the Implementation of the ESEA Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program* examined how state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees implemented the program's four central components—identification and recruitment, records transfer, service delivery, and coordination and collaboration—to help reduce barriers to migratory children's school success. The findings can be used to help describe the program and the children it serves and to inform program planning and support by MEP grantees, subgrantees, and the Department.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees identify, recruit, and prioritize migratory children for services?
2. How does the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) system facilitate the transfer of educational and health information to support enrollment, placement, and accrual of credits for migratory children?
3. What services do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees provide to migratory children?
4. How do state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees collaborate with other programs and organizations to deliver services to migratory children?

STUDY DESIGN

The study team administered surveys to all state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees and conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample of state, regional, and local MEP staff in a purposive, nested sample of 10 state MEP grantees, 20 local/regional MEP subgrantees (two per state), and 40 schools or projects (approximately four per state). All 46 state MEP directors and 739 local/regional MEP coordinators (90 percent) completed the online surveys.

Study limitations include self-reported survey data that were not independently verified and interview data that may not represent the full range of views among MEP staff.

Highlights

- Most state MEP grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees and outside contractors to manage the identification and recruitment (ID&R) process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising MEP recruiters. At the same time, states played a significant role in recruiter training, monitoring, and quality control.
- Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported that MSIX had improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states and facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers.
- State MEP directors considered a variety of factors in determining specific services to provide or fund for migratory children, including the needs of migratory children, the availability of funds, student outcomes, policy priorities, and the services provided by other programs.
- State MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees that provided direct services to migratory children most commonly provided supplemental instructional services that included reading/language arts instruction and mathematics instruction. Among the state MEP grantees and local/regional subgrantees that directly provided support services to migratory children, most provided school supplies, language support (e.g., translation or interpretation services), and individual advocacy services.
- Most state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees that provided direct instructional and support services to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide these services.

IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE MIGRATORY CHILDREN

Most state MEP grantees relied on their local/regional MEP subgrantees and outside contractors to manage the ID&R process, including hiring, deploying, and supervising MEP recruiters. At the same time, states played a significant role in recruiter training, monitoring, and quality control.

Under *ESEA*, the state is responsible for ID&R but has flexibility to determine whether to manage the process on a statewide, regional, or local basis. The majority of state MEP directors (74 percent, or 34 of 46 states) reported relying on local/regional MEP subgrantees to manage ID&R.

Recruiters most commonly identified and recruited migratory children using their contacts in the schools, communities, and businesses that migratory families frequent.

State MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators most frequently reported that recruiters identified and recruited migratory children by developing and maintaining contacts with staff in local schools (100 percent of state MEP directors and 96 percent of local/regional MEP coordinators), in places or communities where migratory families are likely to reside (100 percent and 83 percent), with employers who hire migratory workers (96 percent and 81 percent), and with local businesses and organizations that serve migratory families (96 percent and 77 percent). In interviews, local/regional MEP coordinators noted that recruiters often struggled to find out-of-school youth because, for example, farmers and facility owners no longer granted recruiters access to work sites or these youth did not have time to participate in the MEP.

USING THE MIGRANT STUDENT INFORMATION EXCHANGE (MSIX)

Most state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators agreed that MSIX had moderately or substantially improved timely notification when migratory children moved across states and that it had facilitated interstate migratory student records transfers. In interviews, state MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators identified areas for improvement for MSIX, observing that not all states used MSIX consistently or in the same ways, which could lead to gaps in information about migratory children moving across state lines.

SERVING MIGRATORY CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Most state MEP directors considered multiple data sources and factors in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children.

The vast majority of state MEP directors identified several factors as important in determining what services to provide or fund for migratory children, including needs assessments of migratory children (100 percent of state MEP directors), the amount of MEP funding available (98 percent), and migratory student outcomes data (98 percent).

More than a third of state MEP grantees directly provided instructional services and other academic supports to migratory children, including college and career supports and academic instruction. Ninety-three percent of local/regional MEP subgrantees directly provided instructional services to migratory children, the most common of which included reading/language arts instruction and mathematics instruction.

State MEP directors and local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing a variety of supplemental instructional services to migratory children. Nineteen state MEPs provided instructional services and other academic supports, the most common of which were career exploration and guidance (69 percent) and graduation planning and assistance (63 percent). Ninety-three percent of local/regional MEP subgrantees directly provided instructional services and other academic supports, including reading and language arts instruction (84 percent) and mathematics instruction (82 percent).

More than a third of state MEP grantees provided direct support services to migratory children, including leadership development and language support. Ninety-two percent of local/regional MEP coordinators directly provided support services to migratory children, including the distribution of school supplies and language supports, such as translation or interpretation services.

To address the social, emotional, and health issues that migratory children experience regularly that can impact their ability to attend and fully focus at school, state and local/regional MEP subgrantees provided several types of support services. Eighteen state MEP grantees provided support services, the most common of which were leadership development (58 percent) and language support (50 percent). Ninety-two percent of local/regional MEP coordinators reported providing direct support services, including school supplies (82 percent) and language support (74 percent).

COLLABORATING TO DELIVER SERVICES TO MIGRATORY CHILDREN

Most state MEP grantees and local/regional MEP subgrantees that directly provided instructional and support services to migratory children collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide these services.

For example, of the 11 state MEP grantees that directly provided reading and language arts instruction, nine reported doing so in collaboration with other agencies and organizations. Similarly, of the 605 local/regional MEP coordinators that provided reading/language arts instruction, more than half (54 percent) reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to provide these services.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The complete report is available online:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/reports.html>