

Homeless Students

Statutory and/or Budget Language

(b) \$2,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$2,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for implementation of chapter 157, Laws of 2016 (homeless students).

(c) \$36,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$36,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for chapter 212, Laws of 2014 (homeless student educational outcomes).

Purpose

The Homeless Student Stability Education Program (HSSEP), funded through proviso BA, provides grants to school districts to improve the identification of students experiencing homelessness and the capacity of the districts to provide support. The goals of the grant processes are to:

- (a) Provide educational stability by promoting housing stability.
- (b) Encourage the development of collaborative strategies between education and housing partners.

The purpose of the \$36,000 proviso funding (named BB throughout) is to support the needs of school districts as they identify and serve students experiencing homelessness. These funds were provided to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to create and post on OSPI's website comprehensive homeless student data reports every other year regarding the educational outcomes of students in homeless situations.

The BB proviso also supports the ongoing work of OSPI to produce/develop/disseminate information to school districts regarding the importance of identifying the signs of child and youth homelessness. These efforts require OSPI to develop or acquire a short video regarding the identification of homeless students and how to provide services and supports to these students. Additionally, OSPI is to adopt and distribute to school districts best practices for choosing and training the federally required school district homeless liaisons.

Description of Services Provided

Services provided by proviso BA funding include:

- Increased identification of students experiencing homelessness, especially students whose first language is not English.
- Tutoring, mentoring, and academic coaching.
- Housing advocacy and navigation services, including short term hotel stays.



- Graduation support, including assisting high school seniors in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) and connecting to post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Mental and physical health supports, including access to healthcare, hygiene supplies, and laundry services.
- Increased access to tangible resources to meet basic needs, including connection to community resources and the development of school based resource centers.
- Increased access to transportation, including increased participation in preschool, childcare, before and after school programs, plus transportation routing services.
- Increased supports for Unaccompanied Youth, including obtaining identification and other necessary documents.
- The provision of, and access to, extracurricular activities, including before and after school programs
- Professional development for both school and community partners on the rights of students experiencing homelessness.
- Contracts with housing and community resource providers to improve service delivery and collaboration.

This is not an exhaustive list.

The services provided by the use of proviso BB funds include the continued development of training, materials, resources, and data reports related to the identification and support of students in homeless situations. Updated videos highlighting the stories of children and youth experiencing homelessness have continued to be produced and posted to the OSPI website. Additionally, OSPI hired a Homeless Education Training Supervisor specifically to train and provide professional development to school district homeless liaisons (and other district staff) to ensure all liaisons are annually trained in the identification of students experiencing homelessness as well as informed of best practices to support these students at the local level. A portion of the Homeless Education Training Supervisor position is paid through the BB proviso.

Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

Grant award criteria for proviso BA during state fiscal year 2024 included:

- District compliance with all federal McKinney-Vento Act requirements.
- Demonstrated need of the school district based on the percentage of students experiencing homelessness and the percentage of unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Quality of the grant application and the ability of the district to meet students' needs.
- Representation of geographic diversity across the state.
- Proposed grant activities that complement existing supports for students experiencing homelessness, and that do not supplant federal, state, or local funding.
- Greater weight given to districts that demonstrate a commitment to:

- Partnering with local housing and community-based organizations with experience in serving the needs of students experiencing homelessness or students of color.
- Serving the needs of unaccompanied youth.
- Implementing evidence-informed strategies to address the opportunity gap and other systemic inequities that negatively impact students experiencing homelessness and students of color.
- Reporting on academic and non-academic outcomes for students served by the grants. These outcomes include but are not limited to:
 - Services accessed by students experiencing homelessness.
 - Academic outcomes of students experiencing homelessness.
 - Review of activities implemented including successes and challenges.
 - Number of families and unaccompanied youth placed in stable housing.

Beneficiaries in the 2023-24 School Year

Number of School Districts	49
Number of Schools	0
Number of Students	13,267
Number of Educators	0
Other	0

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

State Funding History

BA – Homeless Students

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
2023	\$1,200,000	\$1,198,924
2022	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000
2021	\$1,200,000	\$1,164,730
2020	\$1,000,000	\$997,495

BB – Homeless Student Educational Outcomes

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$36,000	\$35,900
2023	\$36,000	\$32,358
2022	\$36,000	\$33,236
2021	\$36,000	\$36,000
2020	\$36,000	\$35,896

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

BA – Homeless Students

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	13316
2023	4267
2022	3500
2021	2678
2020	12

BB – Homeless Student Educational Outcomes

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	295 districts (plus charter schools, Tribal Compacts and other LEAs)
2023	295 districts (plus charter schools, Tribal Compacts and other LEAs)
2022	295 districts (plus charter schools, Tribal Compacts and other LEAs)
2021	295 districts (plus charter schools, Tribal Compacts and other LEAs)
2020	295 districts (plus charter schools, Tribal Compacts and other LEAs)

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

In 2019, the authorizing legislation (RCW 28A.300.542) for proviso BA was revised to include the option of providing two-year grants, to require geographic diversity as a factor for grantee selection, and to provide greater weight to grant applications that include local partnerships and strategies to address opportunity gaps for students of color experiencing homelessness.

In 2023, the authorizing legislation (RCW 28A.300.542) for proviso BA was again revised to increase funding for FY24 and FY25 only, from \$1,200,000 to \$2,500,000 annually. In addition, the amended language further clarified the goals of the program, expand on the allowable use of funds, required the development of shared goals and outcomes in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, and required OSPI to jointly produce with Commerce, a publicly available biennium report on those goals and outcomes beginning in 2024.

Programmatic changes for proviso BB include expanded training provided by OSPI and increased staffing dedicated to training and professional development of local district staff related to the identification and needs of students experiencing homelessness. A collaboration between the OSPI McKinney-Vento office and the OSPI Communications Office has produced and posted OSPI Original Films that tell the stories of children, youth, families, and liaisons to

raise awareness. These films are publicly available and are used in liaison trainings to improve awareness and educate district staff and the public regarding the impacts of homelessness. These films have also been highlighted across other OSPI programs and divisions. Additionally, OSPI has moved the semi-annual homeless student data legislative report from every other year to an annual report.

Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

The one time increase in funding for FY24 and FY25 allowed OSPI to award \$2.17 million in grants, increasing the number of districts receiving proviso BA from 17 in FY23 to 49 in FY24. Districts across Washington State represented 8 of 9 Education Service Districts and 20 of 39 counties; and the number of students served by proviso BA increased from 4,250 students in FY23 to 13,267 in FY24. In addition, the number of proviso BA grant recipients with community partners that received Homeless Student Stability Program funding from Commerce increased from 17.6% in FY23 to 42.8% in FY24. This resulted in improved housing and educational stability for students, with districts reporting that students obtaining permanent housing increased from 1,837 students in FY23 to 3,423 in FY24.

In addition, districts reported improvement in training delivery for school district staff and community partners; better access to basic needs, mental health supports and referrals for other support services; a greater ability to coordinate transportation for highly mobile students; improved ability to help students and families obtain stable housing; attendance; improved academic performance; and increased high school graduation rates.

The key evaluation component of proviso BB is the annual homeless student data report prepared for the legislature. This report highlights the ongoing academic successes and challenges of students in homeless situations including:

- Meeting graduation requirements.
- Experiencing disproportionate discipline compared to most other student groups.
- Higher than average absence rates.
- Lower assessment scores compared to most other student groups.; as well as information regarding sub-populations such as students receiving specialized services, are migrant, unaccompanied, or are identified in other student groups.

Major Challenges Faced by the Program

In FY 2024, the greatest barriers reported by districts receiving proviso BA funds were the lack of housing and shelter, and insufficient staff. Districts reported difficulty staffing a liaison when there is not a dedicated funding source for the position, high staff turnover, challenges retaining good staff when they are funded with competitive grants that are of short duration, a need for more bilingual staff, and the challenge of staff fulfilling multiple roles. Other challenges reported by districts include costly transportation arrangements, particularly for students who are sheltered in neighboring districts due to a lack of resources in the district of origin; an increased

need for translation services in multiple languages for newcomers to the United States; a shortage of mental health services; a lack of businesses, employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, and community resources for rural districts; limited financial resources to support students and families doubled up or couch surfing; funding timelines and restrictions on the use of funds; and the ability to provide required professional development to district staff with full schedules.

Proviso BB funding remains a challenge regarding ongoing support for students experiencing homelessness. The COVID Relief funding (American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth) provided by congress specifically for students in homeless situations allowed Washington to provide grants and services to over 200 districts, most of which had not received state or federal funding specifically for students in homeless situations in the past. This one-time funding ended September 30, 2024, leaving districts with gaps in staffing and service for vulnerable students.

Future Opportunities

The Homeless Student Stability Education Program, funded through proviso BA, has provided students experiencing homelessness stability in their schools and communities for over eight years; however, less a sixth of districts across the state have access to these funds. In the 2023 legislative session, proviso BA had a one-time increase of \$1.3 million annually in funding available for FY24 and FY25. This has allowed OSPI to dramatically increase the number of districts being served by this grant, and as a result, dramatically increase the number of students served and the depth of support and services provided. This increased funding is set to end on June 30, 2025. A potential return to prior funding levels, and the ending of American Rescue Plan funding, will mean supports and services will likely be cut by more than half in FY26. Maintaining the current funding of \$2,500,000 will ensure high-need districts have the resources to provide a significantly greater level of support and services to their most vulnerable students, those experiencing homelessness.

For proviso BB, continued awareness and support regarding child and youth homelessness should expand to be more inclusive of very young children including infants and babies, children in preschool and Head Start, and older youth including students exiting high school to enter the workforce or higher education. With more than 40,000 school-aged students experiencing homelessness in our state, finding adequate funding, awareness, and other support is a continued opportunity.

Other Relevant Information

N/A

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

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