Homeless Students

Budget Language

$1,200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 is provided solely for implementation of chapter 157, Laws of 2016 (homeless students).

Proviso Purpose

The proviso is used to fund the Homeless Student Stability Education Program (HSSEP), which 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 these grants are to increase student success through educational and housing stability through the development of collaborative networks of support made up of school district staff, housing providers, and community-based organizations.

Services Provided

Services provided by proviso funding include:

- Dedicated staff positions / case management / liaison support
- Basic needs assistance
- Transportation support
- Community resource referrals and partnerships
- Academic support and graduation planning
- Support for unaccompanied youth (UHY)
- Student identification and outreach
- Extracurricular participation support
- Family engagement and student advocacy
- Staff training and awareness-building
- Attendance monitoring and engagement supports
- Mental health and social-emotional supports

This is not an exhaustive list.

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

Grant award criteria for the Homeless Student Stability Education Program during state fiscal year 2026 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.
- Partnerships with local housing and community-based organizations with experience in serving the needs of students experiencing homelessness or students of color.
- Prioritized services to meet the needs of unaccompanied youth.
- Implementation of 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.
    - Number of families and unaccompanied youth placed in stable housing.
    - Number of students obtaining educational stability (defined as the ability to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the school year)

Beneficiaries in the 2025-26 School Year

Number of School Districts:	32
Number of Schools:	0
Number of Students:	7,155
Number of Educators:	0
Other:	0

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$1,200,000	$1,199,999
2025	$2,500,000	$2,500,000
2024	$2,500,000	$2,500,000
2023	$1,200,000	$1,198,924
2022	$1,200,000	$1,200,000

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

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	7,155
2025	16,403
2024	13,316

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

Proviso funding is allocated by the Legislature to fund the requirements of RCW 28A.300.542, via the Homeless Student Stability Education Program. The Legislature has amended RCW 29A.300.542 and changed the amount of funding allocated to OSPI for meeting the RCW requirements several times since 2019. Specifically:

In 2019, RCW 28A.300.542 was amended to: include the option of providing two-year grants, add a requirement for geographic diversity as a factor for grantee selection, and provide greater weight to grant applicants that include local partnerships and strategies to address opportunity gaps for students of color experiencing homelessness. In addition, RCW 28A.320.142 and 2016 c 157 s 5 were each amended to require each K-12 public school in the state to establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school and high school.

In 2023, the Legislature increased the amount allocated to OSPI for RCW 28A.300.542 for FY24 and FY25 from $1,200,000 to $2,500,000 annually. In addition, RCW 28A.300.542 was amended again to further clarify the goals of the program, expand on the allowable use of funds, require the development of shared goals and outcomes in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, and require OSPI to jointly produce with Commerce a publicly available biennium report on those goals and outcomes beginning in 2024.

In 2025, the Legislature decreased the amount allocated for RCW 28A.300.542 for FY26 from $2,500,000 to $1,200,000 and removed all funding for the education portion of the Homeless Student Stability Program for FY27 (i.e. the 2026-27 school year).

In 2026, the Legislature restored the budget allocation for RCW 28A.300.542 for FY27 to $1,200,000.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

Proviso funding primarily increased districts' capacity to build coordinated systems of support for students experiencing homelessness by funding staff who served as connectors between schools, families, and community resources. Through strengthened partnerships and cross-system collaboration, districts were able to address housing, basic needs, health, mental health, and educational barriers, ultimately promoting student stability, engagement, and academic success.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

Grant recipients identified three overarching challenges in FY26:

1. Capacity Challenges - Programs are highly effective but lack sufficient staffing and resources to meet growing demand.

2. Housing Challenges - Affordable housing shortages and limited housing resources remain the most significant external barrier affecting students and families.

3. Sustainability Challenges - Many districts rely on grant-funded positions and services that are difficult to sustain without consistent long-term funding.

Overall, districts reported that proviso funded programs are producing meaningful improvements in attendance, engagement, academic performance, housing stability, and graduation outcomes. However, the effectiveness and expansion of these programs are constrained by **insufficient funding, limited staffing capacity, growing student need, persistent housing instability, identification challenges, and the need for stronger data systems and community partnerships.** These challenges suggest that while districts have developed effective support models, additional investments would be needed to scale those efforts and meet the full scope of student and family needs.

Future Opportunities

The greatest opportunity for this proviso funding is to evolve the Homeless Student Stability Education Program from primarily a support program into a **comprehensive student stability and success system**. Districts consistently identified a successful system as one where:

- Every eligible student is identified early.
- Students have direct access to a dedicated support professional.
- Housing and educational systems are more closely aligned.
- Community partnerships provide seamless wraparound services.
- Academic, social-emotional, housing, and career supports are coordinated.
- Data systems clearly demonstrate student outcomes and program impact.
- Funding is stable enough to sustain successful interventions.

Other Relevant Information

None.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2026 Fiscal Year.

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